

Break

Full-time scourge

The Government will soon find that its policy of cutting down teacher numbers by such devices as early retirement is having some unplanned for effects. For instance, one of its most active part-time scourgings has just become a full-time scourge.

Peter Horion has taken early retirement from his teaching job and can now spend every waking minute as Labour activist, chairman of Sheffield's education committee, vice chairman of the AMA education committee, and vociferous opponent of Government education policies. He is now regularly to be found in his office in Sheffield's town hall (which is also of course the seat of much of the most determined local government opposition to Michael Heseltine's depredations), energetically collecting information showing the effect of education cuts on standards in schools. Life as a full-time politician will also include more Parliamentary lobbying.

Horion has been trying to arrange early retirement from his comprehensive school job as a part-time science teacher for some time, but his employers, the Rotherham education authority, didn't get their retirement scheme organized until August. Then he had to wait until half-term, so that a replacement could be found.

He has been replaced by two women (sexists please note) until the end of the academic year. After that the post will disappear as teacher numbers fall, so perhaps he has really played into the hands of the enemy after all.

Divine affinity

The world of educational psychology has been set on its ears by the news that one of their number, Geoffrey Herbert, has given up his job to go into the church.

He is now reading for holy orders at Queen's College, the Birmingham theological college, and last month Lady Margaret, Queen's Bishop, took over his post as Birmingham's chief educational psychologist.

The talking point is that it is only a few years since Liverpool's principal educational psychologist did the same thing. "It is a case," commented one professional colleague sourly, "of psychologists

turning to the church for consolation when they start to doubt their own divinity."

Nothing, however, could be further from the truth in the case of Colin Critchley who in fact left the Liverpool job to become a worker priest. He had always intended to be ordained when he was at university, then went into teaching instead before becoming an educational psychologist. In those days it was either the church or psychology, and it was not until the northern ordination course was started comparatively recently that the chance opened up to study part-time for ordination.

By the time Critchley had successfully completed his three-year course, studying in the evenings and running Liverpool's educational psychology department in the daytime, he had also become possible to take on a non-stipendiary ministry, a resurrection of the worker priest idea, which means in effect that he is part of a team operating out of a parish church, but is paid not by the church but by his other employer.

This is now Knowsley local education authority, for whom he works as an educational psychologist, but only on the basic grade. "I'm an Indian now, not a chief," he moved to Knowsley because that is where he lives; and the area for which he is responsible as a psychologist coincides with his Halewood parish. The L.E.A. is flexible about whether he works for them day time or evenings.

As far as he is concerned the affinity between the jobs is total. "I feel very happy about it because I am able to deal with the complete person, and often with families, so that you see the total problem. Working in the community I can do things I wouldn't be able to do otherwise, and if I come across a pastoral problem I can deal with it with my clergyman's hat on."

Last weekend brought an example of perfect coordination. At the church he carried out a baptism for a mother who had attended the parentcraft course where he conducted a session on child development.

After the fire

Teachers at a Lincolnshire school called off their industrial action after a fire-ranger beat them to it. Members of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers were due to begin action which meant refusing to cover absent colleagues at Central school in Grantham—a comprehensive with 650 pupils—when the fire raged. Central school was one of six in the county picked to lead the protest during the half-term holiday against threatened redundancies.

The school was severely damaged. Thirteen classrooms and the school

library were destroyed by the blaze which is believed to have been started deliberately.

Mr Thomas Booth, the school's head, said: "The staff felt that in view of what had happened, this was no time to be taking industrial action. I personally was very grateful for their decision."

Mr John Maddison, county secretary of the NAS/UNT, said: "We thought it only fair not to put another burden on the school at this time."

The school was closed for two days after the fire but this week pupils were returning to the classroom. Whoever the unknown fire-raiser was, it seems a pretty drastic way of showing just how sweet and reasonable the NAS/UNT can be.

Jacket potato

If you are on the lookout for a modest subvention towards a conference on children's books you might do worse than apply to the Sidney Robbins Trust (care of the National Book League). It was set up to honour the memory of a man who did much to try to bridge the inexplicable gap that lies between teachers and almost everyone else interested in children's books.

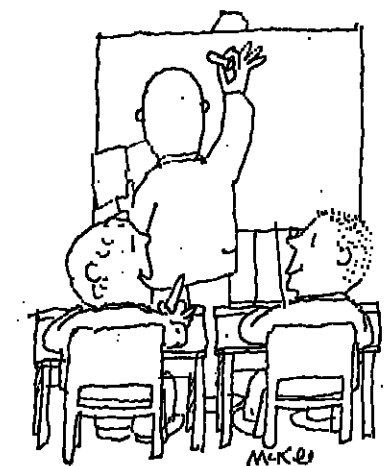
Largely through his efforts some highly successful conferences were held at the old St Luke's College at Exeter, and from the first of these emerged *Children's Literature in Education*, a quarterly that deserves to be better known.

The trust also funds an occasional full-blown lecture of its own, the most recent having been delivered by the eminent book reviewer Elaine Moss. She rather symbolizes the "Robbins reconciliation" since, after 20 years or so of writing about children's books, she chose in 1975 to go and work one day a week as a (qualified) librarian in a primary school. Her talk was about the divergence between her dream of what such an institution would be like and the clattering reality.

It is a pity that more teachers were not present to hear Mrs Moss, the audience apparently consisting chiefly of students and booky folk. If they had been there they would surely have endorsed the opinion that all reviewers are, as naive about the primary schools as Mrs Moss was that it is no wonder that Sidney Robbins had to set up his trust. Members of the trust, however, more teachers had Mrs Moss's instinctive sympathy for matching particular books to individual children, or to small groups; then we might see less of the schematic rubbish which she so rightly condemned.

As a piece of engaged romanticism Mrs Moss's talk was heart-warming; but Sidney Robbins would surely have wanted it to start where it left off. Can it be necessary to spend 20 years reviewing books

before we can use them properly with children? What responsibility do the colleges bear for teachers' parious ignorance of children's books? How comes it, that, after 110 years of state education, some schools are still apparently organized to defeat readers rather than create them?



"It will be interesting to see if new cuts get the chalk or the talk."

Executive action

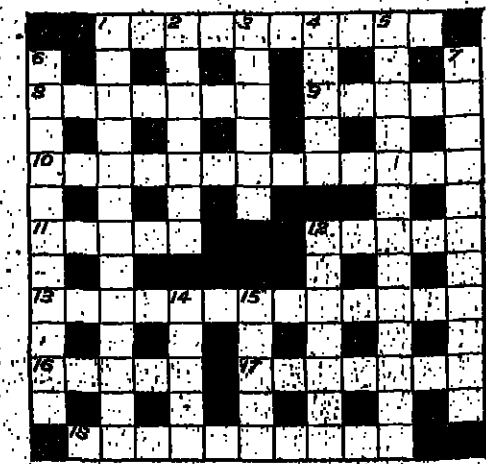
A new mood of Thatcherite realism is abroad at the headquarters of the National Union of Students. Charming in its rationalism, antirealism is time and motion is in other words, the cold winds of recession are howling about the union's ears and it has decided to pull itself together, get itself reorganized and break even.

As a sign of this Mr Ian Coxon, until last week NUS Press Officer, has just taken over as communications manager, one of four new heads of newly organized departments—and the only one, as he states proudly, to have been chosen from the ranks.

Arriving for lunch at a local brasserie, he looked every bit the young executive on his first day in the job: neat grey suit, navy gingham shirt, navy knitted tie. He wore a broad grin too, as well he might, since he is presiding over the fastest growing empire in the student world—may in Britain if the doom-laden stories of the CBI are to be believed.

Mr Coxon will soon have a staff of no less than 10, bearing such awe-inspiring titles as Advertising Manager, National Student Admissions and Student Media Officer. Under his guidance, the plan is to streamline their publications, produce a fortnightly information sheet for local unions, and turn *National Student* from a monthly into a weekly paper over two years.

Crossword No 1,212



Across

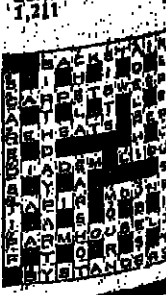
- Green colliery for a young lady? (10)
- No doubt how the modern Arab Sheik arrives by car (5, 2)
- He would never use so slow tactics (5)
- Key to angry speech? (9, 4)
- With a pound you get a bit back truly (5)
- Sailors, however, are
- Current positions that make a 'reputation' (5, 6)
- Invalid road (5)
- Does 'it' make the Chinese, sluggish? (7)
- Danger ably averted on the whole (4, 3, 5)

Down

- Shire meeting place—pleased as pie? (6, 7)

- His plan was to (7)
- Set me up and you end up (6)
- He takes the case of the old king (10)
- Keeping meek and low (5, 4, 7)
- Shyly 'freestyle' (7, 4)
- Teacher's (7, 4)
- Result of (5, 4)
- Away, away (4, 7)
- Formal (5, 4)
- Does 'it' have a lot of olive branch, though maybe no war (10)
- Indicates an national result (5)

Solution to Puzzle 1,211



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Carving out the good life is former arts and crafts teacher at Castleford High School, Yorkshire, Geoffrey Woodcock, 40. Two years ago Geoffrey gave up teaching to work in a converted pigsty, carving figures and furniture. Geoffrey and his wife, Janet, live on home-grown vegetables and milk provided by their Jersey cow, Daisy, who knows a splendidly carved gryphon when she sees one.

Ministers split on future of sixth forms

Junior DES ministers have held up a report on education for the 16-to-19s because it says that sixth-form or tertiary colleges are better than tiny sixth forms. The Macfarlane report has been

postponed for revision until the New Year. Mr Carlisle, the Education Secretary, is in favour of the report's conclusions but the Prime Minister may overrule him. Mark Jackson reports.

Mrs Thatcher may intervene on report

A fierce battle is taking place between ministers at the Department of Education over the future of the school sixth forms. The dispute is so bitter that the Prime Minister, herself a former Education Secretary, may become involved.

It has been triggered by the draft of the Macfarlane committee's report on 16 to 19 education, which calls on local authorities to review their arrangements and sets out the need for a new type of institution, the sixth form college. The report, which is being debated in the House of Commons, is being resisted by the Ministry of Education, Mr Neil Macfarlane, who heads the committee, and by Mr

Philip Morris, the Education Secretary, but Lady Young, the Minister of Education, who still keeps a watchful eye on educational matters. The draft was due to be approved at a meeting of the eight local authority representatives gathered on the committee on Monday.

The report could be published next month. But they were not to consider a revised version, which cannot be published until early next year.

The committee were taken back by the strength of Ministerial feeling against the report, which they had thought studiously avoided coming down on either side in the controversy. Discussion of the issue at the committee's meetings all year have been very mild: instead of the predictable split between the metropolitan district and the county council representatives, the argument has been largely between Mr

Philip Morris, the Education Secretary, and Mr Philip Morris, the Education Secretary, who still keeps a watchful eye on educational matters.

Both sides on the committee thought that the drafts prepared by a group of DES officials and local authority officers, paid careful regard to their susceptibilities—it was described by one member as "reprehensibly innocuous". But Lady Young is thought to have objected particularly to a warning in the report against small sixth forms, and to have criticized the lack of any comparison of costs. Push to end sixth forms: Diana Geddes, *The Times* Education

Correspondent, writes: Those critical of the draft report see its concluding passages as giving a firm push towards more educational provision for the 16 to 19s outside schools. They point in particular to these passages in the report's conclusions:

"Some would say that educational merit, demographic and financial constraints make inescapably to the adoption nationally of a break at 16. We think that there are indeed powerful arguments in favour of educating 16 to 19-year-olds in fairly large groups, and are clear that a scattering of small sixth forms offering an inadequate range of options of different quality and at high cost must be avoided."

Thus in many areas sixth-form or tertiary colleges may be the best solution, both educationally and financially."

The committee argues against the contention that a change of institution at the age of 16 is a disincentive to continued education: the evidence, including that gathered for the committee by the High

points in the opposite direction, it says, and shows that participation rates tend to increase where separate 16 to 19 institutions were provided.

Mr Slater, caretaker at Ferry Lane primary school, Tottenham, would be expected to join in the industrial action said Mr Spencer. Mr Slater's earnings and overtime were put under the spotlight by Conservative members of Harrogate, who have called for an inquiry.

Mr Robin Young, Labour leader, said Ferry Lane—built as a community school—was in constant use "except for in the middle of the night."

He said that two months ago the council told NUTP it wanted more men at Ferry Lane to spread the workload and overtime payments, but the union had refused. "We don't believe this level of overtime can be justified with so many unemployed."

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE CHEWING GUM IN PULPHOUSES AS IT IS VERY DIFFICULT EXPLAINING TO THEM OVERTIME TO THE PAPERS. *Catchpole*

Mr Ralph Callow, co-ordinator of the Schools Council gifted pupils programme, cast an even greater eye for teachers. He said the survival of mankind depended on the kind of teaching gifted children were given today.

Mr Riley, from Birmingham, said he had organized a group of

Caretaker on £14,000 may strike

by Sarah Bayliss

Mr Harry Slater, the school caretaker who works 46 hours overtime a week on a £14,000 a year, will be expected to join in lightning industrial action by his union to defend overtime working.

The dispute has arisen in the Labour-led London borough of Harrogate, after school caretakers refused to accept council plans for reducing the number of schools which stay open at night.

"The plans would have a dramatic effect on the earnings of school caretakers," said Mr Peter Spencer, a caretakers' leader and NUTP branch secretary.

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Bridge

Even if there is one theoretical best way to play a particular card combination, play in practice depends on various factors. These include the number of tricks you need from the suit, the entry position, and the need to keep a danger hand off lead. I have invented four hands to show how different the effects may be, the suit in question (club) being identical in all four. Let's start with an easy one.

♠ A K Q 3
♥ A K 8
♦ A K 7 6
♣ A Q 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

North leads a spade against 7NT. Since you need all six tricks from the club suit, it is best to lead on the first round: a doubleton King with North is more likely than a singleton King with South. If the Queen wins, you lay down the Ace, unless of course South has played the Jack, in which case you come back to hand for a second finesse.

♠ A K Q 3
♥ A K 8
♦ A K 7 6
♣ A Q 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

This time North leads a spade against 7NT. You need only four tricks in clubs; but it is not safe to return to hand for a finesse. The safest play is to lead a small club from dummy immediately. If the defence lead spades again you can play a second small club from

dummy and claim the contract, except when South began with K-J-3-2 in clubs, in which case you had no hope anyway.

♠ A K Q 3
♥ A K 8
♦ A K 7 6
♣ A Q 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

There are people who open one club on the West hand, and they might then find themselves playing a small slam in the suit. North leads a heart, and since only five tricks are needed from clubs a classic safety play is available. You lay down the Ace, and if both opponents follow you return to hand and lead towards the Queen. You fall (as you would always have failed) whenever South holds K-J-x or K-J-x-x, but you succeed whenever he holds the King singleton. Whenever North holds K-J-x or K-J-x-x you still lose only one trick.

♠ A K Q 3
♥ A K 8
♦ A K 7 6
♣ A Q 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Against an optimistic 7NT North leads the Queen of hearts, which you win in hand. The nasty feature of this deal is that if South gets the lead and plays a small you may be badly down, so you must keep South off lead if possible. You play a small club, and if North follows with the Jack you obviously cover with the Queen. If this wins you do not lay down the Jack. North may have been deceiving you from dummy, but just lead a small one from dummy, just lead a small one from dummy, just lead a small one from dummy.

But what if North follows with the 3 (or 2) ... should you play

the Ace to keep South off lead? This clearly gains whenever North began with J-3-2, but it loses when he began with K-J-3 or K-3-2, and a finesse of the Queen is therefore as good. Again, if the Queen holds a small club, then dummy on the second round guarantees the contract unless North began with all four or South still has the King guarded.

There is one other case, where a great many players would go wrong. You lead from hand, and North plays the King which you take with the ... uh-huh, you just blew the contract. Just play small from dummy and claim 9 tricks (10 if North returns a spade). (Be honest, now, did you duck or play the Ace?)

♠ A K Q 3
♥ A K 8
♦ A K 7 6
♣ A Q 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Finally, changing the club suit, how would you play out after a spade lead on the following?

♠ A K Q 3
♥ A K 8
♦ A K 7 6
♣ A Q 10 9 8 7 6 5 4

You cash the A-K of spades, and the Queen will take care of your diamond losers, if you can get to dummy. Playing the club Ace makes the contract (plus overtrick) whenever the King is singleton (22.44 per cent). "Playing small to the King (60 per cent). But playing small from both hands makes 12 tricks whenever the King is singleton or doubleton (53.14 per cent). Of course, I could have made the problem easier by transposing the 5 and 4 of clubs, but then North would have led a diamond."

John Graham

The Macfarlane report will not now appear till the new year (page 1) because of a rearranged action by the defenders of the traditional sixth form who felt that it was in danger of coming down too strongly on the side of the tertiary college and a break at the age of 16. It seems that Lady Young and Dr Rhodes Boyson have reinforced the traditionalists—who reckon they can count on Mrs Thatcher's sympathy also—against the further education solution.

The result threatens to be an even limper document than might otherwise have been expected. It was never likely that Macfarlane would endorse the tertiary college without reservation, nor yet that it would propose a system-wide change. Common sense decrees that there must continue to be many areas where conventional sixth forms are still viable and where the costs of changing to a tertiary system—financial and social—would far exceed any benefits which might accrue. But Mr Macfarlane and his colleagues should at least be firmly positive about the virtues of consolidating sixth-form work in viable units and putting full and part-time work together for the 16 plus, and should go so far as to make this the preferred arrangement for the future where circumstances are favourable.

Resistance comes from those whose entire proper concern for the quality of education for the 11-16 year olds makes them apprehensive of the consequences of living off the upper secondary school. At present pupils in the lower forms benefit by being taught by those who also teach the sixth form. A sixth form is a symbol of a school's quality and academic purpose. Teachers, in 11-18 schools, instinctively strive to hold on to their sixth forms. The Burn-



Macfarlane and the tertiary solution: the insiders fall out

ham points system does no more than underline a fact about people and institutions: it is not possible to spend 80 or 90 years making the academic sixth form the jewel in the crown of secondary education without creating a professional presumption that every secondary school should have one.

But potent as these traditional instincts may be, there remain the uncomfortable statistics about the size of sixth forms collected by the DES for Mrs Williams when she looked into this in 1977—the average size of the traditional sixth form was only 79, compared with the minimum of 100 which was needed to provide an acceptable range of options economically; among comprehensive schools, 40 per cent had traditional sixth forms of less than 50 pupils.

Mrs Williams, for her part, drew back in the face of resistance from the teachers' unions and the local authorities.



Neil Macfarlane: must be firmly positive.

Since then the numbers have changed slightly as the relevant age groups are still increasing; there have been more

attempts to develop consortia and shared sixth form resources. But the underlying pattern remains highly unsatisfactory and must get materially worse as the numbers in the age groups fall by a third between now and the mid-1990s.

Everything points to a tertiary solution, making use of the flexibility of the further education system. This is not to say there are no snags. Of course there are. But it is an illusion to suppose that anyone has a snag-free solution. At the same time as seeking to overcome difficulties in schools when sixth forms are too small, authorities should apply themselves specifically to maintaining, and raising, standards in 11-16 schools. Evidence is beginning to accumulate from counties like Hampshire, Lancashire and Devon that secondary schools can be organized satisfactorily without sixth forms. In fact, experience seems to show that critics soon become reconciled to a change of system; some of them become staunch supporters. If a system-wide reorganization were attempted there might well be severe strains but this is not in prospect. There is time to combine the steady growth of tertiary colleges with careful planning and support for the 11-16 high schools.

When the Macfarlane committee was set up there were those (including TES) who criticized its composition and character as a creature of the DES and the local authorities. These criticisms will be amply borne out by this tiny little group is unable to come up with a clear policy preference.

It was always on the cards that a committee of insiders would be nobbled by those with a vested interest in the status quo. It is to be hoped that the report, when it appears, will prove the report wrong, but the present omens do not look promising.

Exam league tables: give schools 'handicaps', says statistician

By Bob Doe

Government plans for the compulsory publication of school exam results were criticized this week at a meeting of the Royal Statistical Society in London.

With school league tables looming in 1982 the society met to discuss how accurately such results reflected school performance. Every speaker stressed that not all schools started off with the same chances because of variations in their intakes. The progress each school made in the face of these differences was more significant than the crude total of passes achieved.

Dr Peter Mortimore, head of the London Education Authority's research and statistics section, suggested every school should have a "handicap" like in golf to indicate the unequal chances schools started off with in the exam tables.

The ILEA was said to be the only authority trying to tackle the thorny question of publishing results.

Dr Mortimore, who was one of the authors of *Fifteen Thousand*, the study of 12 inner London schools, said the authority was looking for better ways of using exam results to compare school progress.

But he warned that "statistical

jiggery pokery" taking into account the differing intakes could upset some apparently successful schools as well as putting poor results in perspective.

Mr John Gray, of the University of Sheffield Institute of Education, predicted that publication of results in 1982 would be "a mess" and could result in serious injustices to schools with unfavourable intakes.

He said local authorities should help parents to understand the wider implications of exam results and say what action they planned where schools appeared to be doing badly in relation to their intake.

The Government's proposals include the publication for each school of the numbers of grades achieved in each subject at A level, O level and CSE, and the numbers of pupils achieving different numbers of passes.

They do not bear out one criticism made at the RSS conference that these would be expressed only as a proportion of those entering exams and not of the whole age group.

The draft proposals call for the total number in exam year groups and the numbers taking exams. But there is still some concern that the form the Government is suggesting does not make it clear that the fifth form numbers should be referred to the roll at the start of the fifth year and not at the end when many non-examinees will have left.



Curriculum vitae: private schools in South Wales have opened up shop in a Cardiff department store to sell themselves to shoppers. At the desk is Evan Roberts, a Llanelli Cathedral School pupil.

Governors set to sack head

by Bert Lodge

Mr Barrie Trueman, head of Sacred Heart RC comprehensive school, Redcar, was told at a governors' meeting this week that he would be dismissed.

He was suspended in September for failing to attend a governors' meeting.

The matter is not closed, however, because of the articles of government relating to voluntary aided schools. These, together with the head's contract of service, require two meetings of the governors before the dismissal can be confirmed. A second meeting has been arranged for December 2, thus allowing the minimum period of 14 days to elapse from the decision being announced.

Should his dismissal be confirmed on that date, Mr Trueman will still have the right to be heard by a Cleveland education committee who have the power to veto the governors' decision.

On the occasion of his suspension in September, Mr Trueman told TES that his failure to attend a meeting was merely a technical reason for the governors' action. The history of division between himself and the governing body went back five years to the time when he refused to accept back several members of staff who had been on strike, despite being urged to by the governors.

Scared Heart school has been intermittently in the headlines for the past 10 years since a dispute over staffing, when the school went comprehensive. Four months ago a deputy head Mr John Hallam lost a libel action against the NAS-UWT general secretary.

Industrialist called in

The Government has appointed an industrialist to look into the success and failure of national projects designed to make schoolwork more relevant to industry.

Lady Young, the junior education minister, announced the appointment of Mr Neville Cooper, director of administration at Standard Telephones and Cables, when she opened the second regional conference on the work of schools which took place in Newcastle this week.

The Government had commissioned the independent study of the nature and extent of activities of major organizations to find out how their effectiveness could be improved both at local and national level, Lady Young said. Mr Cooper is expected to complete this work within six months.

Lady Young also referred to the importance the Government attached to micro-electronics. The £9 million four-year micro-electronics in education programme started in March was expected to introduce 750 teachers to micro-electronics in the first year.

Teachers pointed out that lack of money and the difficulty of getting time off limited school-industry links rather than any unwillingness on their part.

Comment

New formula: old jobbery

Elsewhere in this issue (page 10) Philip Venning writes about the new system of local government finance brought in by Mr Heseltine's new Bill which has become an Act. How local government is financed is vital to the way education is paid for, and to the kind of life teachers and schools enjoy. The present system is unsatisfactory. The new method will be as bad or worse.

Two weeks from now the Government will announce how much money they are going to provide in grant-in-aid to local authorities for 1981-82. This is a regular feature of this season of the year, fraught with anxiety for all whose bread and butter comes from local government. The anxiety is greater than ever this year because (in theory, at least) the Government still has to decide on the formula which it will adopt for the future distribution of the new Black Grant to be paid out in accordance with Mr Heseltine's new Act.

The new system, like the old, is concerned with distributing money from the central Government to a network of local authorities which differ in their own wealth (and tax-raising capacity) and in the demands they make on it.

It would be manifestly unjust simply to distribute the black grant on a population basis, but there is endless room for argument about the judgments which should be built into the formula to give one kind of authority more per head than another kind of authority.

Much of the argument between the Government and the local authority associations has concerned how, and how much, the formula should take account of social factors—meaning essentially, how far there should be positive discrimination in favour of areas of social disadvantage. Often social disadvantage is a euphemism for ethnic diversity, so the debate about grant formulae can easily stray into racial politics—witness Mr Mark Carls's sharp exchange with Mr Ian Counts of Norfolk and the Association of County Councils.

The purists of local government (especially

if they come from shire counties) argue that "educational" not "social" criteria should be used in the weighting process—that is, measures of the educational consequences of special factors, not the social factors themselves. But this takes the argument right back into the heartland of educational research—the grey area where pundits wrangle with the differences between causes and correlations. The mind boggles at what the NFER could do with the Black Grant formula.

There is every reason to believe the DES have done a first class job for education in fighting their corner with the Department of the Environment and the local authority associations. The irony of this is, of course, that far from seeking to establish objective methods of matching resources to clearly defined needs—the ostensible object of the exercise—the DES have been struggling for all they are worth to make sure that the formula does not radically alter the present balance. Nobody knows what an L.A. "ought" to spend, but the damage which unnecessary "shocks" to the system could cause in present circumstances is obvious, and any large-scale redistribution would have big repercussions. No amount of juggling can prevent a seismic tremor in London where all services—and education rather less than most others—cost much more than elsewhere. In the old days this used to be attributed to the corporate wealth of the London County Council; now it is ILEA's unique precepting powers which underpin a tradition which goes back a long way. It is difficult to resist the view that tradition has more to do with it than the actual situation on the ground. London far outspends all other major cities in England and Wales, including many with far more than their share of social disadvantage.

As Philip Venning shows, the new system is, if anything, even more vulnerable to political manipulation than the old. Far from being objective it leaves it wide open to the government of the day to impose its own political and social priorities. The melancholy fact is that governments of both parties have brazenly used their ability to vary the formula to benefit their own political friends: the Conservatives favouring the shires; Labour the cities. It would be naive to believe that this kind of political corruption is now going to stop.

Stepping back from Warnock

As our round-up of opinion on the Government response to Warnock (page 4) indicates, it can be summed up as "special care without special provision". The minimal legislation now foreseen is hardly overwhelming; no one can pretend that removing statutory categories of handicap or handicap

ening parents' legal rights will produce much more than necessary foundations for future action.

The Department of Education has moved out or two steps in the right direction along what will be a very long road if the Warnock Committee's recommendations on education for those in special need are to be implemented at the current speed.

All the more important, then, to keep a close watch on how proposals in other Whitehall departments might affect the same population. Some of the report's recommendations also called for action from the Departments of Employment or Health and Social Security. So far, there has been no official response from either department. Now it seems that the DE's agency, the Manpower Services Commission, is contemplating a proposal that would be a definite step back in Warnock terms.

One of the options in the MSC's Approach to the Corporate Plan, 1981-85, is the closure of all 27 of its Employment Rehabilitation Centres (School to Work, page 8).

The centres provide assessment and short, individually tailored, work preparation courses for people of all ages who have been disabled by injury or illness. As the Warnock report noted, there are many handicapped young people among their clients, and some of the ERCS were developing a very helpful young person's work preparation course which was notably successful in leading on to jobs.

There are not, however, nearly enough ERCS. Most of them are in urban areas and Jack of Hostels prevents their wider use. One of Warnock's specific recommendations was that "the extension of young persons' work preparation courses to all ERCS over the next few years should be brought about as quickly as possible". More courses were started in response to this call. What is to happen to them now?

The proposal to close all ERCS is not one of the many economies being dredged up all over Whitehall to pay the enormous bill for the increased Youth Opportunities Programme which it is agreed will be needed because of unemployment among school-leavers. The ERCS instead under another heading: staff cuts in line with Civil Service targets.

That does not make it any the less disastrous or out of step with stated Government priorities. Disabled people of whatever age are finding it increasingly difficult to find jobs. The Youth Opportunities Programme helps some handicapped young people, too, but its work in this direction is currently supplemented by the ERCS and in any case ought to be developing more projects to meet their needs more specifically.

The Government really wishes to be seen to be taking the needs of handicapped young people seriously. It is worse than useless to be offering legislation with one hand and threatening to take away provision with the other.

Higher learning and earning

Professor Stephen Bragg's lengthy essay in "Inverting the System" in *Education Today* (edited by Norman Evans, and published by Grant McIntyre, £5.95) is published by Grant McIntyre, a large number of radical proposals of the kind which usually float several feet off the ground and are only occasionally caught and anchored by the vice-chancellor. He flirts with proposals of ordinary degrees to be followed by two years of vocational education for some students and two more years of advanced academic work for the high fliers. Or, as an alternative, he envisages an increase in the placement of academic staff—i.e. with a deliberate deterioration of the staff/student ratio. The second looks more likely, in the wily Treasury's parlance, to be a pump for the deterioration in staffing ratios without any lengthening of the course.

Professor Bragg wants to abolish the binary divide with a Higher Education Grants Committee and he wants more vocational training carried out either by universities or colleges or by employers. There is a big vague student support, though he is quite clear, as opposed to means-tested grants and bursaries, to prefer supporting students by making them eligible for supplementary benefits. Students could draw this state aid while studying full-time and not being available for employment; they would, in effect, be getting non-means-tested grants. He also suggests that students should be able to study away from home but reckons that this should not be too strongly encouraged as it is now by the grants system.

The background to this blueprint—of which are quite compatible with the report of the House of Commons Education Committee—is a collection of articles, which have a common concern about what Evans calls "the development of a responsible relationship between higher education and the earning world". One of the authors writes about this vitally important topic, which hits the heart and stirs the spirit. Also this volume cannot be said to be a refreshing one. It contains some good sense but baries it deep in a welter of words.

No comment

Two teachers required to earn extra money on Saturday selling potatoes to be taken the needs of handicapped young people seriously. It is worse than useless to be offering legislation with one hand and threatening to take away provision with the other.

by Philip Venning

The planned drop in teacher numbers in the next few years is likely to be as bad as feared, because few pupils have not chosen to stay in the sixth form. Latest provisional figures from the Department of Education show that last year 72 per cent of pupils left English schools at 16—a proportion that has remained absolutely constant since the school leaving age was raised.

In the years leading up to the raising of school leaving age the proportion staying on rose steadily. The official planners assumed that after a hiccup, the trend would continue. One hope was that if a proportion decided to stay on, the effect of falling numbers might be partly offset by larger sixth forms. This in turn might protect some teachers' jobs.

Figures reveal that it has not worked so far, in spite of high unemployment which might encourage young people to leave education. Not so the proportion leaving school to go to a level in colleges has only at 3.5 per cent.

The same is true for other non-vocational, further education, such as agricultural and nursing courses.

DES - Statistical Bulletin 15/80; November, 1980.

Politicians get to grips with report on ILEA

Sarah Bayliss

Members of the Inner London Education Authority sought precise information and detailed advice when they met to discuss the report of the House of Commons Education Committee on the ILEA's education system.

Members of all the ILEA's sub-committees attended a discussion of the report behind closed doors. The report was opened to the public at a 5,000 word report was written for the Government. The report was made public at a meeting on 19 November. In 1980, the ILEA had 130 full-time teachers, and 10 part-time teachers, and 10 part-time teachers.

The report was made public at a meeting on 19 November. In 1980, the ILEA had 130 full-time teachers, and 10 part-time teachers, and 10 part-time teachers.

Examples of waste and inefficiency were beginning to arrive on head teachers' desks this week. Copies were read first and not jump to the conclusions we've read in the press," said one head teacher.

Labour members on the schools sub-committee wanted more precise quantification of the report's very damning statements. "For example, that two thirds of the A level lessons observed were nowhere near extending able pupils and that roughly two thirds of the O level classes observed did show any urgency of approach."

Mrs Ann Soper, chairman of the schools sub-committee, said it was essential to name schools in the debate as long as the authority's own inspectors knew which schools the HMI were concerned about. She did not want individual schools "piled up" for their faults.

and by some generalizations. On a personal note she said, "I felt tremendously sorry for all the teachers I know individually who have slogged their guts out for the past five years and who must have felt demoralized."

Earlier this week Mr Peter Newman, the HMI, had uncovered a fundamental issue—the distribution of power and what should happen if the authority disagreed with school governing bodies.

Mrs Patricia Kirwan, Conservative chief whip, said her side also wanted to hear HMI criticisms in more detail. "The general criticisms of comprehensive schools confirm our very worst fears," she said. She strongly disapproved of a call for Mr Newman to resign, made by Sir Kenneth Baker, Conservative MP for Paddington.

The Department of Education has stated that no further reports on major education authorities are planned by the HMI.

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Platform

'The race is between education and catastrophe'.

Edward Heath outlines the implications of the Brandt report on international development for all who teach

Windows on the world

It was H. G. Wells who observed in his *The Outline of History* that "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe". The world has faced many dangers down the ages and a preoccupation of overcoming these has always been the conquering of ignorance. The Brandt report, published earlier this year, spoke of some of these dangers, which could indeed bring catastrophe upon us; if we are to avoid this, education in its broadest sense has a vital role to play.

Willy Brandt expanded on this theme in his introduction to the report, when he spoke of what would be expected of the younger generations, destined to carry major political responsibility. Reflecting the views of every member of the commission, he said: "... we are convinced of the great role education has to play: a better knowledge of international, and not least, north-south, affairs will widen our views and foster concern for the fate of other nations, even distant ones, and for problems of common interest. The commission feels that schools all over the world should pay more attention to international problems as that young people will see more clearly the dangers they are facing, their own responsibilities and the opportunities of cooperation—globally and regionally as well as within their own neighbourhood."

Clearly, the task suggested is an immense one, with two distinct but inter-related aspects. First, how should the educational system incorporate this work into its existing structures? Secondly, what aspects of development questions should be included?

The first question I am inclined to leave to the educational experts. It is not for me to say whether new courses are demanded, for example, or whether existing curricula need expansion. What I must say, however, is that any change of such an approach represents a major change in the introduction of party politics into our schools. To explain to children the problems they will face as adults is surely one of the most important tasks of schools. These problems may be professional, related strictly to the employment of the individual, or they may be problems of a wider kind. The increasingly complex and inter-related world in which we operate demands that its citizens should be more aware of the framework within which they are bound to live. This is not a party political approach in any sectarian sense, and pupils will surely be left to reach their own conclusions about the political system best suited to solve the problems of which they will be made aware. The truth of this is underlined by the Commission's own experience. Its 18 members covered the whole political spectrum, and came from countries of every description, yet their eventual report was unanimous. Neither left nor right can lay exclusive claim to the message of the Brandt Report.

It is rather the second question, of what needs to be included in this educational process, to which I would prefer to address myself. Development education is definitely an inter-disciplinary affair, touching on history, geography, sociology, religion, politics and the sciences, as well, of course, as on economics. I certainly do not intend here to examine these various aspects individually, but rather to outline the problems as I see them, in the broadest framework.

At the outset there are two important points that need to be made: first that the situation in the



urgent one, that must not be allowed to continue a moment longer than is absolutely unavoidable—and secondly, that the findings of solutions to the problems involved is in the interest of all the nations of the world. What the Brandt Report emphasized is that moral considerations are important, but that more successful in motivating the governments of the world is likely to be an appeal to enlightened self-interest.

I have heard criticism of the report, to the effect that it is a cynical and materialistic document. Such criticism is utterly without foundation. The truth is that moral calls for action have largely failed, but it does not stimulate the ambition of the moral arguments. What it does is to show that if the necessary action is to be taken, the appeal to mutual interests is more likely to succeed.

There is a difficult balance to strike here for those charged with the education of the young, from whom the moral and idealistic arguments are the ones most likely to evoke a response. But they are also the ones most susceptible to propaganda. The task of international interdependence should be the main concern of development education.

These facts are stark and clear. A good place to start is with the malfunctioning of the international economic system, which now, in the words of the Brandt Report, "damages both the immediate and long-term interests of all nations". It was the events of the

bear them, and morally intolerable for us in the north.

Unfortunately, there are few signs of an end to these horrifying conditions. Indeed, the population explosion recently experienced continues apace. During the next 20 years about another two thousand million people will be added to our planet, the same number as the world's total population at the beginning of this century. The mind boggles at the immense increase in the demand for food, raw material and energy this will create. Although this population increase is concentrated in the south, neither north nor south can escape the consequences. They have a vital mutual interest in coping with this problem.

This is true because if existing food shortages continue alongside expanding world population, not only will millions be threatened with starvation in the poorer countries, but food prices in the rich countries will go steadily higher. Similar arguments clearly apply to energy and to basic materials.

A brief resume such as that serves to illustrate the breadth of concern and the number of issues that will need to be discussed if this truly international dimension is to be added to our children's education. Each issue is capable of almost unlimited expansion, and there is much room for discussion as to the exact balance that will be required in the end.

We deceive ourselves, however, if we believe we will be entirely able to avoid controversy. Merely to pose the problems, to define the situation, will not suffice. Questions must also be asked about solutions, and many may feel that only political answers can be given. Here I reiterate what I said about the Brandt Commission's experience—that it is possible to reach agreement in the face of competing political ideologies. It is for this reason that I believe that the Brandt Report itself would provide an admirable basis on which to model curricula.

While the report contains detailed proposals for long-term reform, in the words of the report, "the world cannot wait for the longer-term measures before embarking on an immediate action programme for the next five years to avert the most serious dangers, an interlocking programme which will require undertakings by all parties, and also bring benefits to all".

Its principal elements—all of equal importance—would be:

- (1) a large-scale transfer of resources to developing countries;
- (2) an international energy strategy;
- (3) a global food programme;
- (4) a start of some major reforms in the international economic system.

In the longer term, the report makes proposals for agricultural reform, population and migration programmes, the international debt, the North-South trade, the role of the multinational corporations, the world monetary system, development and international organizations.

It is a challenging list, but I believe that it does cover all the important points. I hope that our schools can take a lead in educating tomorrow's leaders in their responsibilities. The only alternative would be to lose the race between education and catastrophe, and there are no prizes for the runner-up.

NEWS

Special care without special provision?

by Diane Spencer

The Government's White Paper on special needs in education (which is the Warnock report which was a reform for educating handicapped children, has been heavily criticized by the majority of organizations responding to it for failing to provide extra resources to implement its proposals.

At least 80 organizations have sent detailed replies to the Department of Education after the White Paper's publication last August. Legislation based on its proposals is expected to be contained in the Queen's Speech.

The two main teachers' unions were particularly scathing. The National Union of Teachers said: "The Government clearly wishes to shift the credit for adopting the principles of the Warnock report without having to deliver the necessary resources."

The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers said that the proposals were ill-thought and impractical unless accompanied by massive new and adequate resources. It asks the Government to shelve the legislation and policy described in the paper until the nation reaches the level of prosperity which the Government foresees.

Both unions fear that the proposed legislation could mean that unless more cash is provided to meet the needs of the children, the NAS/UTW and "Parents will be misled and authorities will be put into a position where they will try to cope by imposing unrealistic and unacceptable demands on teachers". The National Association of Teachers is also concerned about the effects on staff. As the proposed legislation has significant implications for the organization and management of schools, local authorities will need to consider "both human and financial" if the concept of educational need is to be adopted. "We also consider the heads and teachers must have financial recognition for the responsibility they will have."

The Children's Committee which advises the Education Secretary on the co-ordination and development of health and social services for children, says that the proposed legislation is "incompatible with the children's concerns and misleading to their parents". The new Act were to take effect alongside the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act of 1970 and the Children Act of 1975 it is not being fully implemented.

Many organizations also regret the absence of several important recommendations of the Warnock report.

MENCAP, the national society for mentally handicapped children, has urged the Government to consider its rejection of the proposal that education authorities should be responsible for part of the cost of programmes in Adult Training Centres.

The Society of Education Officers, while condemning it as "a regressive and unhelpful step", particularly regretted the decision to set up a national advisory committee to monitor provision of standards.

The White Paper says several local authorities may be asked to restore free milk to school children. It also says that the Government will consider the possibility of a "national milk subsidy" to help local authorities. The Warnock report, however, says that the Government should consider the possibility of a "national milk subsidy" to help local authorities. The Warnock report, however, says that the Government should consider the possibility of a "national milk subsidy" to help local authorities.

NEWS

Hold up on membership figures Carlisle holds back on recognition of PAT

by Richard Garner

Mr Mark Carlisle, the Education Secretary, is to delay a final decision on whether to grant recognition to the Professional Association of Teachers, the union whose members are pledged never to strike until the New Year.

In a letter to teachers' organizations already represented on the Burnham committee, which negotiates teachers' pay, the DES says Mr Carlisle "is still disposed" to give PAT a seat on the committee but will wait until a complete review of union membership has been carried out.

He says he expects to be able to announce the results of the review in January so that the newly constituted committee can take office before negotiations start on next year's pay claim.

Officials at the DES have repeated their request for details of teachers' organizations fully paid-up membership figures and have asked them to calculate how many serving members they have in schools in England and Wales by December 1.

The teachers' organizations have been asked to exclude all unem-

ployed, retired, student or associate members and any members in Scotland, Northern Ireland, further education or independent schools. The National Union of Teachers said this week that the DES letter still ignored questions they had asked at the beginning of the year as to how various categories of members to be excluded should be defined.

Mr Peter Dawson, general secretary of PAT, which claims a membership of 21,000, said: "I would not argue with the common sense of the approach now being adopted. It is a logical approach to the situation. We feel we shall arrive at Burnham in due course and strike a blow for moderation in education policy-making when we do."

A six-point code of professional conduct has been drawn up by the Professional Association of Teachers. The code says that teachers should ensure all lessons are adequately prepared, observe the discipline of their school, consult with their colleagues, make sure they are fully briefed in their subjects through in-service training, meet parents and involve themselves in extra-curricular activity—with their pupils.

Council closes two-year old 'danger' centre

by Diane Spencer

London's Camden Council is to close a £1 million purpose-built children's assessment centre opened two years ago because, says the council in a report, it is "totally unsuitable for its present use" and "to some children it is a dangerous place to be".

The building in Langtry Walk, Swiss Cottage, was designed as a reception centre mainly for run-away found in the area's three main railway stations, and to house disturbed and delinquent children who would, after a few days, move to community homes with education or other children's homes. Although it was built for children, to be divided into three separate units, and 14 or 15 residential units, and many of the rooms have never been used.

The report, by two consultants, says the building is "totally unsuitable for its present use" and "to some children it is a dangerous place to be". The building is "totally unsuitable for its present use" and "to some children it is a dangerous place to be". The building is "totally unsuitable for its present use" and "to some children it is a dangerous place to be".

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the noise from within the building is unacceptable to neighbours and the mainline railway running behind the building is inadequately fenced off and the prospect of a fatal accident is a constant fear. Children cannot be dealt with individually because of the design of the rooms so a confrontation with one child may involve the whole group.

Mr David Shalev, one of the architects believes that the building should work: "It has only been used half-heartedly."

He does not think the building is to blame for many of the children's problems. "I do not understand the relationship between the design of a building and its potential."

He said the idea was to have an open atmosphere with access to courtyards and the roofs which gave extra space. "I do not see how you can physically lock in 30 children in anything but proper prison."

Mr Shalev's firm won an award from the Royal Institute of British Architects last year for a home for the physically handicapped commissioned by Camden council before the centre was handed over.

The council claimed that many of the troubles were caused by the introduction of new fire regulations in 1975 which meant that the centre could not be divided into three units as planned when it was commissioned in 1970.

The centre's fate has not yet been decided.

Subsidy may restore free milk

Local authorities may be asked to restore free milk to school children.

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Paintings on exhibition this week at the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden were the work of children from St James Primary School, Potts Wood, Orpington, who attended the opening.

Health report accused of lead poisoning 'cover up'

by Bob Doe

A Government report on the health hazards of lead pollution was attacked this week as "useless", "deeply flawed" and "dangerously misleading" for failing to blame leaded petrol as the cause of brain damage in thousands of children.

The Government's 12-man Lawton committee was accused of a "disastrous" error and breaching "unwarranted" complacency concerning the hazard to children in a report published by the Conservation Society.

The Society's report was drawn up by the university chemists: Professor Derek Bryce-Smith of Reading and Dr Robert Stephens of Birmingham University.

It calls for the abolition of lead additives in petrol within a year. Unlike the Lawton report, it blames airborne lead as the major source of the metal finding its way into people's bodies.

The Government's report suggested that food and water were more important sources of lead than the amounts inhaled, but the Society's report says this ignores the fall-out of lead from the air finding its way into food.

The two committees also take the Lawton committee to task for not accepting the evidence of studies which indicate that even quite small

quantities of lead in children can be harmful, reducing their measured intelligence and affecting their behaviour and development. Urban preschool children and the unborn are thought to be particularly susceptible.

"We conclude that most UK children are now suffering an epidemic of low-grade lead intoxication for which the addition of lead to petrol is largely though not wholly to blame," say Bryce-Smith and Stephens.

The adulteration of petrol was "a crime against the human race", committed in the blinkered pursuit of business profits, cynically concealed and perpetuated by political influence and the cosmetic arts of public relations.

Professor Patrick Lawton of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, who chaired the Government's working party on lead was this week referring all questions about its report to the Department of Health and Social Security.

The department said it was considering the society's report carefully with the Lawton report before deciding what action to take on lead.

Lead or health by Dr Bryce-Smith and R. Stephens published by the Conservation Society, 65 Dora Road London S.W.15.

'Left-wing' hymn book protest

Only two schools in Kent appear to be using the hymn book *New Life*, in which an investigation was ordered this week by Mr John Barnes, chairman of the education

This followed complaints from the chairman of Dover Young Conservatives, Mr Barry Williams, of left wing bias in the hymn book contents. Mr Williams said he was transmitting complaints received from parents of pupils at Dover Girls' Grammar School.

One "hymn" to the tune of Pop Goes the Weasel—criticizes spending on arms and space probe

programmes while neglecting the homeless. The county supplies department said he could remember only two requests for the hymn book in the 10 years since it was published.

But the publishers, Gillard Press, said they had sold more than 100,000 copies up to last year. The Rev John Bailey, the book's editor, dismissed the complaints this week as nonsense but Mr Williams said he was transmitting complaints received from parents of pupils at Dover Girls' Grammar School.

One "hymn" to the tune of Pop Goes the Weasel—criticizes spending on arms and space probe

Labour row over abolition of voluntaries

by Biddy Passmore

The London Labour Party has adopted a manifesto for next year's GLC elections which could, if interpreted literally, lead to the abolition of all voluntary schools in inner London.

Approval of the manifesto, which also includes commitments to restore this year's cuts in the ILGA's budget and to abolish streaming in secondary schools, has led to a bitter feud within the London Labour Party which is still far from resolved.

Sir Ashley Bramall, leader of the ILGA, and other members of the ruling Labour group, are said to be appalled at the manifesto's contents, some of which run directly counter to the Authority's existing policy. They say it contains many commitments which have never been democratically discussed. Sir Ashley, who has fought hard in the past for moderate Labour policies, appears to have decided that there is no point in trying to hold the left back this time, but instead to walk in the hope that he can persuade ILGA to be more realistic after the election.

The disagreement came to a head when Left-wingers on ILGA tried to force the leadership to start implementing the manifesto's policies straight away. This would mean restoring this year's cuts—and possibly increasing spending—from April 1, when the Authority is expecting a savage cut in funds as a result of the new block grant.

A working party including Sir Ashley Bramall drew up the report on which the manifesto is based. But it was considered far too moderate by the London Labour Party's Executive Committee, which "boiled it up" considerably. It was then circulated for discussion and completely redrafted, on the basis of amendments submitted by militant parties and trade unions. This final version was then adopted virtually unopposed at a Regional Executive meeting in Camden on October 17.

The final document states categorically that "no child should be educationally segregated by virtue of his or her sex, religious, ethnic or socio-economic status". This commitment, which should logically lead to the abolition of all voluntary schools, is widely held to be a place of compromise. "We have no power to abolish these schools and I'm quite sure there's no wish to abolish them on the part of most Labour voters," Mrs Ann Sofer, chairman of the schools sub-committee said this week.

Other new commitments added to the manifesto at the final stage include:

- reversal of this year's 4.2 per cent cuts (the earlier paper simply recognized they were "wrong")
- a cut in the price of school meals from 35p to 25p—the figure when the Labour Government left office—and no subsequent increases
- elimination of all streaming in secondary schools
- an increase in the proportion of mixed places in secondary schools to at least half in each division
- no redundancy of any teaching or non-teaching staff

In spite of their distaste for its contents, Sir Ashley and those of his fellow moderates seeking reelection next May must fight the election on it. But a Labour spokesman said this week that, according to the party's standing orders, ILGA policy after the election would be made by the new ruling group.

Oxbridge awards

Worthing Sixth Form College should be added to the list of schools which obtained four Oxbridge awards in 1979, published in *The TES* on October 24. Three boys obtained scholarships to Cambridge and a scholarship to Oxford was won by a girl.

NEWS

Let youngsters drink, parents told

by Diane Spencer

Drunkness among children could be curbed by giving them a couple of glasses of wine or half a pint of sherry with a meal from the age of 12, parents were told this week.

That was said Mr Bill Saunders, director of the alcohol studies centre at Paisley Technical College, Strathclyde, children would learn moderate drinking habits.

His remarks came at a seminar in Glasgow, shortly after the release of Home Office figures showing a 10 per cent increase in the number of drunkenness offences with the highest rate among 18 year olds. Mr Timothy Raison, a Home Office

minister, commenting on these statistics, said he was worried about the number of 15-year-olds and under found guilty of offences. The total of around 400 was much higher than ought to be acceptable.

A recent survey published by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys showed that drinking is starting at a much younger age. Of the youngest age group interviewed — 15 to 18—the average age at which they began to drink was 16 compared with 20 reported by older age groups. About 70 per cent said they had drunk in a pub before they were 18.

The Secondary Heads Association thought it was a good idea for

parents to take some responsibility in educating their children to drinking moderately as long as it was done with "a due sense of propriety". But they were cautious in aligning themselves completely with Mr Saunders' proposal.

The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association also thought the problem should not be left entirely to teachers. Both they and the National Association of Head Teachers said that under age drinking was not a new problem.

"I remember from my teaching

days girls as tight as ticks on older sitting around cloakrooms," said Miss Joyce Baird, joint general secretary of AMMA. Mr Peter Hellyer, one of the NAHT's assistant secretaries said alcohol was so ingrained in society that it hit the headlines less often than glue-sniffing or drug taking.

He thought that the increasing strain on staff caused by cuts in spending meant that they would have less time for pastoral care of pupils, including any difficulties caused by drinking.

The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers said that 10 years ago there were no cases reported of disruption or violence caused by drunken pupils but today there were a few.

Restricted I level unpopular

by Bob Doe

There will be widespread criticism of the Government's plan to restrict the new Intermediate exam to those taking two A levels and to subjects like English, mathematics, science and foreign languages.

There is general support for the new exam but some education colleges and universities are objecting to the restrictions on what would be allowed to take what.

The Schools Council, also, has said the Government's plan does not go far enough. It wants the new available and the target broadened.

The Council has written to the GCE boards and to representatives of local authorities, colleges and industry. It says this is the only live proposal for broadening the sixth-form exam curriculum, the council wants to back this "useful step forward".

The council thinks that it would be a good target for the 30 per cent of A level students who pass only one or none and for some who take A level at all.

It also wants the new exam to include ancillary subjects not usually taken at A level. Subjects that have been mentioned include photography, building construction, classical civilisation and

AMA education conference. Reports by Sarah Bayliss

Agreement on conditions of service for teachers and local authority employers has been reached by the Government's 6 per cent pay limit, warned Mrs. Hillyer, chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities education committee.

Addressing the sixth annual conference of town and city education authorities in Liverpool, Mrs. Harrison said progress had been made in talks to define the teachers' work and progress must continue to be made. Co-operation from the teachers' side was "absolutely essential", she said.

"We now have a threat hangs over us. How we are to expect the teacher to co-operate if there is a representative of local authorities, colleges and industry. It is the only live proposal for broadening the sixth-form exam curriculum, the council wants to back this "useful step forward".

The council thinks that it would be a good target for the 30 per cent of A level students who pass only one or none and for some who take A level at all.

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How out-of-school activities could provide vital skills

Local education authorities should provide more places in further education outside the classroom, Mr. Geoffrey Holland, director of special projects at the Manpower Services Commission, said this would be a solution to education's failure in

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Mrs Harrison said the Government was expecting local councils to do more and more on less and less money. It seemed all too likely that the Cabinet would expect local government spending to go down still further and education was bound to carry the major share of cuts.

The one bright spot was the Manpower Services Commission which would have increased resources "so frightened are the Government about youth unemployment".

She reminded the conference that four years ago it had objected to the MSC saying it was just another quango; but delegates this year had given wholehearted support to working with the MSC and helping the young unemployed.

During the main debating session a Sheffield motion supporting the MSC, calling for maximum co-operation and urging more Government involvement in the 16-plus was carried by Labour delegates from 33 big towns and cities.

Calls for more funds to implement the Warnock Report and condemning the severity of cuts in the public education system were also carried by the Labour majority.

Mrs Angela Rumbold, leader of

the Conservative opposition, said she did not believe the Education Secretary was a "willing partner" in the Government cutbacks, but it was "very important to point out to him that the cuts being introduced are having a very serious effect on the education service".

Labour members pledged they would only co-operate with the Government's assisted places scheme so far as required by law. They would neither publicise it nor agree to pupils transferring from maintained schools at 16-plus to enter sixth forms of independent schools.

A motion from Conservative Richmond calling for the power to charge for nursery education was defeated. Mr David Marlow said he would rather charge parents a small fee than see the service cut back.

A controversial motion questioning the AMA's cooperation with the Tory-controlled Association of County Councils was referred for discussion to the education committee since time ran out.

Other resolutions referred back concerned support for the Certificate for Extended Education, mandatory grants and full or part-time education for all over-16s.

Mrs Angela Rumbold, leader of

Wasteful policy

In an address on falling pupil numbers, Professor Eric Braithwaite pointed to financial waste in authorities which allowed schools to shrink and function half-full.

He knew of one chief education officer who three years ago had valued each school place at £69 a pupil. A school built for 2,000 pupils with only 1,000 pupils in it was losing an L.e.a. £69,000 a year.

And yet where parents and teachers campaigned hard, the Secretary of State had refused to let local authorities close shrinking schools. Professor Braithwaite, who as visiting professor at Sussex University has studied 20 secondary schools with falling rolls, knew of a school built for 2,000 pupils with only 380 children in it which Mr Mark Carlisle had decided should stay open.

For the rest of the day, if a listener remains tuned in to the local frequency, all he gets is Radio 4, a service some would doubtless find life without. Many independent radio stations, on the other hand, broadcast 24 hours a day, the rest 18 or 16; and they are all of them strictly local.

But a far more important point is this: it is the prime function of local radio whatever its source, to be popular, and to give people the things they want from radio. Most people, when they listen to radio, are alone. They are shaving, or driv-

ing their cars or ironing or mending their motor bikes. The radio is their companion. They want music and conversation. They want new information, and often they want new ideas. But unless the station is theirs, and is felt to be such by the nature of its programmes, all the good advice and information in the world will be rejected.

To the ordinary listener, it makes almost no difference at all whether the organisation, behind the programme is a public corporation with its own charter, or whether it is a private company with shareholders.

The ordinary listener cares only about the output.

Do they like and trust their presenters? Do they get the kind of music they like often enough? Do they actually enjoy listening, and feel a continuing interest and curiosity about what they are going to hear? Some of their curiosity will be satisfied by strictly local (though not only local) news. But, if their confidence has been won and his friendship cultivated, they may find interest in all kinds of things they would not have expected. They will listen on and not switch off when politicians are talking. They will enjoy music they had hitherto despised, or their thoughts will be directed to parts of society they had never considered.

The plain fact is that both BBC and independent radio provide interest of this kind on their local stations. Both provide services (for instance in very bad weather, they both give detailed information about roads, and both form links between stranded householders and the outside world). Both carry information about what's on, both have phone-in programmes, both answer listeners' questions. They doubtless learn from each other. BBC, for instance, borrowed from Capital Radio the O-level Set Books idea that has been deservedly popular.

People who argue that local radio (and they usually mean independent radio) is "pop and prattle" have misconceived the nature of the service. But they have also missed a crucial point. Local radio is a powerfully educative force. There have been programmes about industry, about local history, programmes about how to bring up children under five, programmes about the local symphony orchestra. But it cannot work as an educative force unless it is heard by its listeners as friendly; as, above everything, on their side.

Local radio, in other words, cannot fail, when it does because children cannot feel that the school is theirs. Radio may often be able to succeed (for instance with careers advice) precisely where school has failed, through alienation. Let us not make its task more difficult by the careless use of meaningless dichotomies. If we don't know much about local radio, let us not speak until we do.

Personal column

Mary Warnock

Sound investment

One of the hardest tasks in life is to avoid being led astray by beguiling words. To teach oneself, and others, not to accept stock phrases is to teach the pursuit of truth; and a stock phrase, once used, even striking, becomes stock while your back is turned. A cliché I find particularly irritating, is the misleading phrase "public service broadcasting".

It is frequently used to contrast, for example, the local radio output from the BBC with that from the independent contractors. This is not a trivial matter. Local radio, whatever its source, plays an important part in the life of an increasing number of people. It is a positive force, and one not yet fully exploited.

The implication of the idea that BBC local radio is "public service" broadcasting, while independent radio is not, is that the latter is rather down-market for entertainment and that those of us who are higher up the market need not bother with it. If we want traffic information, weather forecasts, local news, interviews with visiting bigwigs or discussion of the issues before the local council, we must turn (if we live in an appropriate area) to the BBC. There is the added implication that since independent radio is financed by advertisements, someone somewhere is making a fortune out of it, and everyone is in it for the money.

This myth, I'm sorry to say, is perpetuated by the BBC, who know it for what it is. But, more crucially, it is believed by some MPs, who may not often listen to local radio, though they speak on it, and by many other influential people, especially educationists and teachers.

The facts are totally at variance with the myth. And the myth itself reveals misunderstandings which could stand in the way of exploration of the full possibilities of local radio. In one respect it is

admittedly true that BBC and independent radio offer different kinds of service. Some of the BBC stations are not strictly local. The output from Norwich, for example, can be plainly heard in many parts of Essex, as well as Norfolk and Suffolk. The Solent service is actually intended to cover both Portsmouth and Southampton, two very different towns.

For the rest of the day, if a listener remains tuned in to the local frequency, all he gets is Radio 4, a service some would doubtless find life without. Many independent radio stations, on the other hand, broadcast 24 hours a day, the rest 18 or 16; and they are all of them strictly local.

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The British Association for Japanese Studies invites entries for an essay prize in memory of the late Professor Ivan Morris. The value of the prize is approximately £200.00 and competition is open to all undergraduates in Universities and Polytechnics in the United Kingdom. The subject for this year's essay is "Japan's Most Important Influence on Europe in the Past 100 Years". Entries should be typewritten and no more than 4,000 words in length and should be sent to Dr. G. Daniels, Japanese Studies, The University, Sheffield S10 2TN, by the 31st January, 1981.

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Sporting chance for jobless

by Bert Lodge

Wakefield education committee last week agreed to offer free use of indoor sports facilities to the young unemployed.

This will mean free admission to a sports centre at Knottingley and swimming baths at Wakefield, Featherstone, Normanton and Minster. Another sports centre at Featherstone is excluded because it is heavily used by the local high school.

A paper prepared by Mr W. H. Wright, chief education officer, at the request of the committee, suggests that the privilege be limited to those between 16 to 19 who left school during the past academic year but have no job. But the scheme may be extended to any young person in that age group who is currently unemployed and living in the Wakefield district.

Free use of the facilities will be restricted to weekdays from 9 am to 4 pm in term time—the time those benefiting would normally have been at school. This will allow the general public their customary use.

A call to all local authorities to offer publicly owned sports facilities at cheap rates to the young unemployed has been made by the Central Council of Physical Recreation. After analysing sample costs around the country of taking part in sport, the council found charges had risen by 30 per cent in the past year, a figure well ahead of inflation, while young people's disposable income had not altered from £14.35 for 16-year-olds and £16.35 for the 17-18s.

More than 5,000 primary schools have entered teams in the English Schools Football Association six-a-side championship.

Sponsored by Smith's Food Group, preliminary rounds have already started and the winners will have played in 40 games before they reach the final. This and the semi-final will be played at Wembley on the 15th of January.

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OU likely to put price of learning up after DES warning

The cost of some Open University degrees will reach £2,000 if last week's announcement of a likely increase in fees from next January is implemented.

And more than half the offers of places the university is making for a January start on some courses would, certainly be rejected, in some areas of study the rejection rate had already reached 48 per cent, before last week's announcement.

A rise in tuition fees from £67 to £98 in January with increases in summer school fees from the present £62 would price an honours degree in science or technology at about £2,000, the OU said this week.

The probable increase in fees follows a warning to the university



Pictured in rehearsal for the Schools Prom which takes place at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on November 24, 25 and 26, is the chamber choir and orchestra of the Latymer School, Edmonton, London. This, the fifth Schools Prom, is sponsored by The Times Educational Supplement, and Commercial Union Assurance.

Union calls half-day strike protest against job losses

by Richard Garner

Members of the National Union of Teachers in Lincolnshire will be staging a half-day strike today in protest over cuts in staffing which could make 20 to 30 of their colleagues redundant in the New Year.

The county council's education committee has agreed to axe 333 teaching posts by the end of December. Letters have been sent warning teachers that their employment will be terminated by December 31, but redundancy and early retirement schemes will mean that the number facing the real prospect of unemployment is reduced to 30.

Meanwhile, members of the National Association of Schoolmasters-Union of Women Teachers in Lincolnshire will be staging a half-day strike today in protest over cuts in staffing which could make 20 to 30 of their colleagues redundant in the New Year.

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High-speed degrees on offer

A degree in 18 months is now possible at some institutes of higher education.

In a further attempt to meet the serious shortage of maths and physics teachers the government has agreed that five-term courses leading to Bachelor of Education degree may be available for suitably qualified people.

The sort of candidate in mind would be a mature person with at least the standard of Higher National Certificate in engineering, science of physics and may have been made redundant or be looking for a change in career.

The latest course to be recognized will start in January at Crewe and Alsager college of higher education. Dr Ian Roberts, admissions officer, said they were hoping to provide for about 20 students initially.

"We expect to be able to fit them in with the current BEd course."

The Department of Education said no general approval for 18-month courses existed but, if individual institutions submitted programmes which satisfied the validating body the DES was prepared to examine them.

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School to work

Councils may take over jobless aid schemes Reshaped YOP on the cards

by Mark Jackson

Staff cuts may force the Manpower Services Commission to hand over the running of the youth opportunities programme and other Government measures for the young unemployed to the local authorities. Leaders of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, which represents the big city councils, are meeting MSC officials later this month to discuss the plans—reported in last week's *School to Work*—to expand YOP and start turning it into a serious programme of education and training. The AMA representatives will suggest that instead of slashing other MSC activities so as to staff the reshaped programme, the commission should let the authorities run the scheme as its local agents.

The local authority team will argue that the education service is already doing most of the practical work, with its careers departments arranging work experience schemes with employers and placing youngsters in the programme, while colleges are providing education and various kinds of training courses. They will suggest that the commission should deal directly with colleges, as well as with employers and voluntary bodies running schemes and courses for the youngsters.

But, faced now with a Government demand for a further 8 per cent cut in its staff—council cuts have been among the heaviest in the civil service—the commission is likely to see the proposal, which would eliminate much of its YOP, as a possible alternative to some more agonising choices. Among the fairly desperate measures it is having to consider is closing down the 27 employment rehabilitation centres, which train the disabled, including many young people, to earn their living.

The commission's special programme division is already resigned to the idea that it will have to relax its tight bureaucratic control of the YOP schemes in order to avoid a big increase in MSC staff when the programme expands next year.

If the commission agrees to the AMA proposals, it will almost certainly make a virtue of necessity and say that the programme has reached a stage where the commission can carry out its original intentions of putting the scheme under local control.

FE Unit challenges national training boards

The Further Education Unit, the Government agency set up to develop the curriculum, is challenging the training structure run by employers and the unions.

The unit is calling for combined education service and industry bodies to organize training locally, independently of the industrial training boards and other national arrangements.

The body set up by the Manpower Services Commission to review the 1973 Employment and Training Act for the Employment Secretary, which consisted mainly of representatives of the boards and of employers and unions, has just endorsed the existing structure. The FEU is now publicly launching a minority report by the only further education representative on the review body, Mr Dai Edwards, former principal of Rotherham college of technology.

Mr Edwards proposed that the requirements for trained workers should be given to new local boards made up of education authorities and industry representatives who would be responsible for coordinating colleges and industry training facilities. The Manpower Services

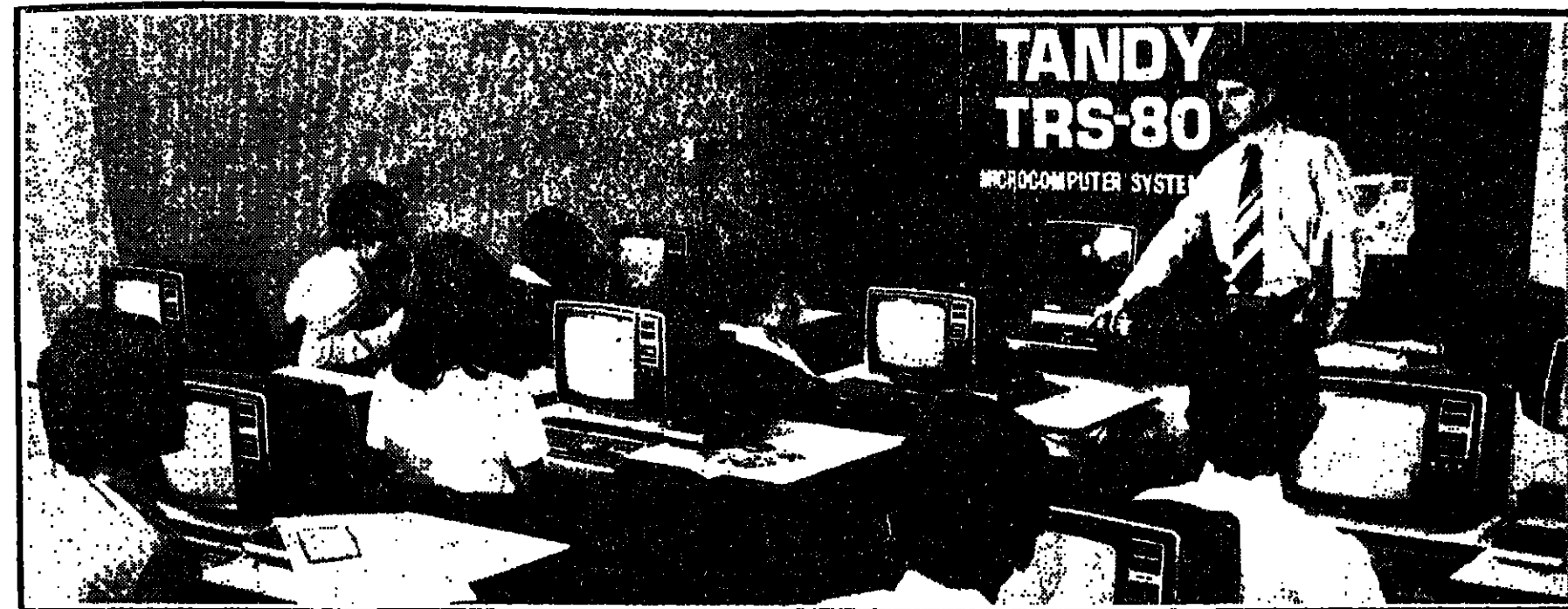
Commission would be required to provide funds for training programmes, which would also cover the young unemployed.

In its formal comment, the FEU says that the review's recommendations would not provide a strong enough coordination between education and training systems, and that it has "considerable sympathy" with Mr Edwards's report.

In a speech at Manchester at the weekend, the unit's director, Mr Jack Mansell, called the review appointing, and said the FEU was questioning the effectiveness of the mechanisms it suggested. To produce young people with the flexibility of mind and the transferable skills needed in a world of rapidly changing employment would require much more radical changes in the training system.

He repeated calls already made by the FEU for a national training scheme available to all youngsters, and said it would require a national development programme for all concerned with the instruction of 16 to 19-year-olds, whether in education or training, and for a hierarchy of education and training advisors with authority to promote liaison.

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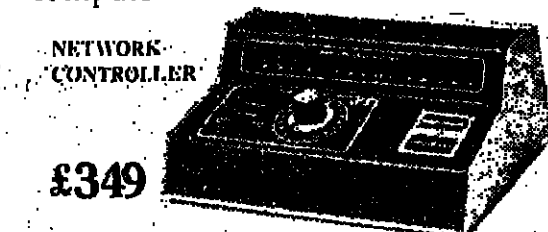
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Careers service 'hinders race bias work'

Careers services in many parts of the country are hindering Equal Opportunities Commission efforts to stop employers discriminating against black youngsters, the commission's staff claim.

"We are certainly not getting all the cooperation that we would like", an official told a press conference at the commission's London headquarters. Some depart-

ments would not report employers who persistently refused to take on qualified black applicants, said Mr William Williams, the commission's employment promotion section. She said that the reason for the lack of cooperation was obvious—the departments were afraid of upsetting relations with employers.

The conference was called to announce a report on a study of

job discrimination against young blacks in Nottingham. It found that nearly half of the 100 firms tested in the two years study turned down black applicants in favour of white candidates with no better qualifications or previous experience; and that in more than a third of the cases equally qualified blacks and whites viewed only the white candidate.

NEWS

'Give language its place, but don't say linguistics'

by Bob Doe

Lessons in language—not just English or French, but language—should be on the timetable, a conference in London heard last weekend.

Mr Tony Tinker, a teacher from Southlands Comprehensive School, Reading, told a meeting of the British Association of Language Teachers that language courses were needed to complement the existing courses of foreign and mother tongues.

"But don't call it linguistics", he warned. "The word terrifies people, and they won't know what you mean. Call it language studies."

More awareness of the form, structure and acceptable variety of language could lead to more efficient use, and language studies could provide common linguistic terminology for the school and a basis for the language policies the Dullock report said every school should have.

Understanding how language was used was also a valuable preparation for parenthood.

Language studies could combine the common elements of both English and foreign language teaching and perhaps even replace modern

languages altogether in the first year of two of secondary schooling, Mr Barrie King, Somerset's adviser for modern languages and English agreed that collaboration between these departments was rare and few language policies had progressed beyond peripheral issues like spelling.

In one middle school he found the third year French syllabus said "introduce the concept of the verb". The fourth year English syllabus said "introduce the concept of the verb". Pupils found the different approaches confusing, he said.

But he did not want language courses introduced as a way to force English and modern language departments together.

In both areas of the curriculum he wanted to see language used that was more meaningful to pupils. Translating sentences like "Fetch a clean towel and send for the vicar" offered little relevance and few of the contextual clues were important to the less able.

"Foreign languages are looked upon perceptively by kids as dead languages like Latin", he concluded.

Survey shows poor prospects for black teachers

Black teachers suffer from prejudice and discrimination in their schools, claims a south London teacher who came to Britain from Jamaica in the 1950s.

Norma Gibbs published a booklet last week based on a survey of 100 of London's teachers of West Indian origin, which says some had made over 20 attempts to get promotion. Half the teachers she questioned were on scales 0 or 2. One said he had actually gone down the promotional scale since he came to Britain.

Ms Gibbs says education authorities should monitor the progress of black teachers to ensure an effective equal opportunities programme is pursued, according to the Race Relations Act. She also calls for a national organization for black teachers.

West Indian Teachers Speak Out, Lewisham Council for Community Relations, 48 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 5JH, 70p, plus 20p for postage.

Cheaper meals may be offered to pull the customers in

Northumberland is considering cutting the price of school meals to attract more customers in its first schools.

Parents of nearly 20,000 first school children will be asked before the end of term if their youngsters would take school meals if the price would take school by 10 pence to 45p. The only catch is that at the same time the menus would be changed from traditional roasts and home-made puddings to convenience food and fresh fruit.

The authority intends to save money on meals as well as increasing custom. At present only 9,000 first nine-year-olds have school dinners compared with just under 17,000 a year ago.

Third World teach-ins blocked

The Government last week turned down a plea for continued public support of projects designed to teach about development issues, even though a report now on the desk of Mr Neil Martin, Minister for Overseas Development, shows that private funds for such work will be forthcoming only if government money is also provided.

Last autumn the Government decided to run down a substantial fund for backing efforts to educate public opinion about third-world issues. Two hundred grants were in operation in October, 1979, but will be reduced to four by March, 1982.

Last week, representatives of Oxfam, Christian Aid and the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development met Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, and Mr Martin, to protest about cuts in British aid and to ask for continued support for development education. They were told that the Government could not find more money for education about development.

But the development education lobby is still hoping to save two national programmes, the Scottish Education Action for Development and the Centre for World Development Education.

NEWS FEATURE

Big changes in the way the Government shares out money for education between local authorities will result from a new law aimed at controlling total spending by local authorities.

For the first time local councils are to be told by the Government how much they should be spending on education and may be penalised if they go too far over the mark. This will be one of the main effects of the Local Government Planning and Land Act, which introduces a new system for deciding how much central government subsidy each local authority will get.

How education spending is set

Education is the biggest and most expensive of all the services run by local government. No council, however rich, could pay for it solely out of the rates, so the Government makes a yearly grant out of taxpayers' money.

However much or little Government money it gets, a council is free to make up the difference or expand its total budget simply by putting up its rates to the necessary level. There are no legal limits on how much a council may raise its rates. Until recently electoral unpopularity was considered a sufficient incentive for local authorities to control their spending. But the new Act for the first time introduces financial penalties for councils that raise their rates too much.

A council has not only been reasonably free hitherto to fix the size of its total budget, but it can also decide what proportion to spend on each of its services, from education to housing to libraries. Though the central government grants have worked out on the assumption that certain shares will go to each service, each council has had some freedom in the past to disregard the assumption.

In practice however no council has ever been able to squander all its money on gold-plated official cars. Many local services have to

Under the new Local Government Act which became law last week:

- each local authority will be told how much to spend on education
- this figure will be strongly influenced by the amount of social disadvantage in the area, particularly the number of immigrants

Block grant: beginner's guide

Report by Philip Venning

be provided by law, to standards that are laid down nationally.

There have to be schools for all children aged five to sixteen, for example. Teachers cannot be paid less than the Burnham scale. Until this year schools had to run a meals service which charged fixed prices. But within these obligations local councils still have considerable choice over how they spend their budget.

So the extent to which a local authority decides to cut (or increase) its education spending depends on three things: how much it gets from the rates; the size of its central government grant; and the priority it gives education compared with other services.

How the grant is fixed

Every year the Government publishes a public spending White Paper, which indicates how much should be spent by both central and local government in the next few years. Present Government policy, as revealed in the last White Paper, is that defence spending should rise but education spending should fall. The White Paper also reveals more detailed policy decisions, for example, that the number of teachers in schools should decrease but not as fast as the

projected drop in pupil numbers. Because schools are run by local authorities and not by the Department of Education, the Government cannot simply impose these cuts as it can with the employment service, for example. All it can do is state the assumptions behind the grant it gives to local authorities.

During the following months groups of civil servants and local authority officials meet to work out what total local authority spending is likely to be the next financial year, in the light of the White Paper. This sum is then argued over by the politicians—by local authority representatives and the Government—and the final agreed figure is known as "total relevant expenditure".

The next step is for the Government to announce, as it will in a fortnight's time, what proportion of this total it will pay for with its central grant, and how much local councils will have to find out of rates or charges (such as council house rents).

The final step is for the Government to decide on "cash limits"—how much it will reimburse local councils for pay and price rises in the coming year. Two weeks ago the Government took the unprecedented step of announcing that it was only willing to finance wage rises for local council workers next year at an average of 6 per cent. Local councils can, of course, pay more, but only at the expense of genuine productivity gains, or by raising the rates.

How the grant is shared out

The most difficult and controversial part of the whole system of local government finance is how the central government grant is shared out between individual local councils. If every council was given an equal share of the money, or a set 60 per cent of its bill, the standard of local services would vary so wildly as to be unacceptable.

Schools in one area might have tiny classes, the best teachers, and the best books and equipment, while those in a neighbouring area might be desperately short of money.

The total sums raised by the rates differ hugely between rich and poor areas. The "rateable value per head" (a measure of an authority's potential income from rates) was £3 in mid-Glamorgan in 1975-76 compared with £230 in Hillingdon, for example. In addition many authorities, often those with a low income from rates, have special local circumstances, such as a high concentration of immigrants or old people.

By adjusting the size of the grant each local authority receives, the Government tries to even out these differences. But finding a fair way to do this is a difficult task. As a first step the Government decides how much of the grant will be a straight subsidy to domestic rate payers in each area (commercial rate payers get no such help). This is a simple political judgment.

How the old system balanced needs and resources

Up to this point, the system remains unchanged. Until last year the rest of the grant—about three quarters of it—was further divided into the "resources element" (50 per cent), and the "needs element" (50 per cent). The resources element was to help councils with much poor housing that their rates came low. The needs element tried to balance social and demographic differences between authorities.

The resources element was paid to any authority whose wealth, measured by its rateable value per head, was below a certain level nationally fixed rateable value per head. With the exception of a few richer London boroughs, and a few other authorities, most received some money under its heading. A few received a lot.

The most complicated and controversial part of the old system was the needs element. To find which sets of local conditions put a local authority at a disadvantage and in need of extra money, officials used an elaborate statistical-and-error technique (known as multiple regression analysis).

This tried to prove relationships between certain factors, such as the number of pupils of primary or secondary age, and the level of spending in the past. The aim was to distinguish between what an authority was compelled to spend willingly because of local circumstances, and how much it spent simply out of choice.

The objections to the old system were many. First, it had become complicated that no one understood it well enough to discuss it properly. Second, it was claimed that the system automatically rewarded authorities which spent freely and penalised those that were frugal.

Third, the old system, for all its statistical sophistication, on political assumptions as to how much for "needs" and how much for "resources" (which was a special case), and so on?

Three different ways of calculating a council's special needs in primary and secondary education

Option A	Option B	Option C
Weighted adjustment based on: (a) the assumption that 17.5 per cent of children have special needs; (b) prediction of each authority's special needs from a straight subsidy to domestic rate payers in each area (commercial rate payers get no such help). This is a simple political judgment.	Weighted adjustment based on: (a) the assumption that 15 per cent of children have special needs; (b) prediction of each authority's special needs from a straight subsidy to domestic rate payers in each area (commercial rate payers get no such help). This is a simple political judgment.	Adjustment factors for special needs, using multiple regression analysis.

needed that extra educational help (and therefore spending). The formula will be to the overall advantage of education.

Under this formula, 13 urban education authorities, including Salford, Manchester, South Tyneside, and Wakefield, would lose some grant. But several in the West Midlands would gain. Some counties are over-spending on education, but others, including Wiltshire, Cheshire, Hertfordshire, and Staffordshire, will all do well out of the new system. The net effect of the new system is likely to increase the total share of block grant going to education while other services will be slightly worse off.

In general the assessments of education have not been too different from existing spending patterns (mainly because social factors were added and removed from the calculation and the answer came out right). The big exception is the ILEA, which for the first time will receive income from a precept on the inner London boroughs. The few calculations for the ILEA produced assessments dramatically lower than its present spending. Even using option A, which takes account of all the factors, inner city disadvantage in grant will still be a big drop in grant. The formulae, however, suggest that the ILEA's claim to generate extra education costs—the excessive high density of its housing—remains unconvincing.

This formula puts particular emphasis on social factors, and most controversial of all, gives double weighting to immigrants. Last week the DES was accused by a Tory local government leader of favouring a racially biased formula that would give too much money to areas with a high immigrant population at the expense of the rest of the country.

The biggest difficulties occur over the special needs. In the case of education, the education working group decided to start from the basis of the Weir Report which suggested that between 15 and 20 per cent of children needed some kind of special educational help. They then set out six social factors that might identify which children

Education may benefit

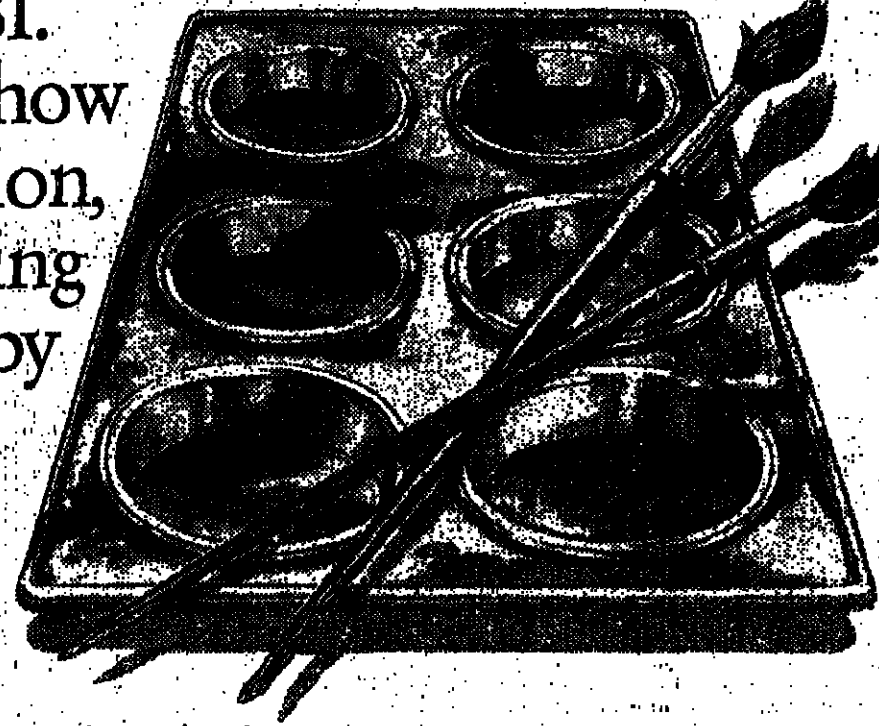
Though the detailed operation of the new system is still unpredictable, it seems more likely that the formula will be to the overall advantage of education.

Isn't it time you showed your class?

If you have talented young artists in your class, now's your chance to show their work at a major gallery. Organised by Cadbury, the 34th National Exhibition of Children's Art invites entries from children in four age groups ranging from under 7 to 17 years of age.

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LETTERS

Punishment, work, duty or service?

Sir.—Reading recent articles in *The TES* I sometimes have to ask myself "What the hell is community service, anyway?" It is used to be a simple concept of young people undertaking community tasks voluntarily, especially in the field of helping those less fortunate in society such as the elderly or handicapped. Recently there has been an explosion of agencies and provision with an emphasis on young people working in the community.

Many schools now have a community studies course which relates knowledge and information to practical visits and personal involvement although some schools still abuse the notion by seeing community studies as a way of getting rid of low-ability classes for an afternoon.

Intermediate schemes and community service orders are on the increase and will continue to be if the Government's White Paper to reduce the age of eligibility from

17 to 16 is accepted. Both these schemes may be preferable alternatives to borstal or detention centres but they have the unfortunate effect of emphasizing the penal element to "community service". The more recent unemployment crisis has seen the MSC promoting a significant number of community service placements under the Youth Opportunities Programme where young people are paid for their "service" to the community.

So what have we got now? The suggestion of a compulsory national community service. Great! Does anyone know where all these opportunities are which will provide an appropriate experience for young people and their community? Will it be regarded as punishment, work, duty or "service" whatever that now may mean?

I happen to believe that learning about one's community is an essential part of the education process and that having an opportunity to voluntarily make a response to it is

the right of every young person whether it takes the form of giving service, political action or apathy. At the moment we face two major problems, the first is the reduction of suitable opportunities for involvement in the community for partly due to the proliferation of "schemes", the second is the inhibiting factor on young people who may be labelled delinquent, unemployed or under compulsion when they wish to undertake community service voluntarily.

I register a positive negative to Mr Deryk Brown's notion of conscripting all school leavers to community service and the similar notion promoted by those who pretentiously call themselves "The Commission on Youth and the needs of the Nation". I wonder how old they all are.

JOHN TATE,
95 Station Road,
Woodhouse,
Sheffield.

No final answers on screening

Sir.—As the guest editor of the latest issue of *Remedial Education* and as co-author of a recently published book on identification and follow-up of learning difficulties, I should like to comment on Mr Doe's dramatically titled article "Early warning screening" (page 10, *The TES* of October 31 (page 10), "Early warning screening" is a resounding flop.

Mr Doe's style of reporting is totally typical of brief journalistic incursions into matters of which he is superficially knowledgeable.

In the case of "early warning screening" the topic-area is broad and seethes with unresolved and unresolvable issues and confusions and those centrally involved with the development of screening approaches in this country are taking differing theoretical and methodological stands, would agree that one essential aim has been hypothesis-testing.

This is precisely what Rennie has done in one locale for every report showing one there are counter-reports indicating reverse findings. In a wider text, the American and Canadian experience confirms the fact that there are no "final" answers—personal hope during the past years of involvement in one of screening approach in one of London borough is that among other techniques, the use of useful and not-so-useful information gained from the implementation of such a system, educationalists continue to evolve and refine learning systems so that a screen will not eventually be necessary.

As it is, even at present, the examples of screening systems that are linked in with practical methods (with which educationalists are concerned) are few and far between. Bob Doe concluded his article by saying, "The predictive validity of the identification procedure is intentionally reduced."

The hokey debating issue of the area of screening is the validity of prediction and the predictive validity, which is "having said that, it is a high risk, and a researcher is obligated to improve, thus limiting examination of the long-term predictive validity of the instruments."

Bob Doe hints at the nature of this in quoting Rennie as recognizing "that the very high error rate could be partly to the effective remedial measures taken by individual schools as a result of the screening." This is the crux and the reason for the screening procedure being based on the identification procedure.

The article, in attempting to present one viewpoint, ignores the equal significance of the "effective remedial measures" SHEILA WOLFENDALE
Hornorton College,
Cambridge.

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LETTERS

Prep school pressure: why stay at the job so long?

Sir.—I felt sorry for Ms Jill Robinson, author of your feature "The Prep School Pressure" (*The TES*, October 31). She had so clearly been a square peg in a round hole.

The school in which she taught was one of the best in the country, a school of high academic standards. Of 70 youngsters who applied each year only 25 could be accommodated. The school adopts a form of selection: academic ability, modified by those with special claims. Ms Robinson disapproves but she makes no attempt to suggest in what better way one might choose 25 from 70 who want to be there.

So the really offensive and misleading feature of her article is the way she writes about all these horrible people eating meat. She would have loved my (private) school with its sensitive, flexible ambience—but then I try hard not to appoint the sort of person who is a living hell for three and a half years (including six months' paid maternity leave) and then rubs her employer's face publicly in the mud.

ALAN MOULD,
Headmaster,
St John's College School,
Grange Road, Cambridgeshire.

staff I guess two-thirds have never set foot on a touch-line, let alone taught rugby. Even the boys are more likely to be doing ecology or electronics or music if they do not happen to be games-enthusiasts. I do not suggest that our way is better than the way of the school in which Ms Robinson taught: it is simply different. Preparatory schools do differ, enormously. Some are tough as nuts, some soft as marshmallows, and there is every kind of variation in between. That, surely is what real choice is about?

Ms Robinson says that when she took this job she had "an open mind about private education". Good. But she had a very closed mind about educational philosophy. So she was like the vegetarian who writes in *The Times* about all these horrible people eating meat. She would have loved my (private) school with its sensitive, flexible ambience—but then I try hard not to appoint the sort of person who is a living hell for three and a half years (including six months' paid maternity leave) and then rubs her employer's face publicly in the mud.

ALAN MOULD,
Headmaster,
St John's College School,
Grange Road, Cambridgeshire.

Sir.—In the edition of October 31 you printed an article by Jill Robinson on prep school pressures. The author's wholly negative impressions of the school make one wonder why it took her more than three years to make up her mind. Does she not feel any loyalty to the head, her colleagues and the boys? Presumably she did not tear up her salary cheque at the end of each month.

C. L. KIRCH,
Head Teacher,
Wootton Bassett House,
Ash,
Canterbury, Kent.

Sir.—What a joy to read Jill Robinson's article, "The unacceptable face of selection" (*The TES*, October 31). The only unfortunate part was the title with its hint that there is an "acceptable" face to private education. Unfortunately perhaps, but possibly not the authors choice of title as Jill Robinson writes to disprove the theories that have been perpetrated recently on the "changes in private education". How nice to hear an insider's view illustrating the opinions which a lot of outsiders have had for some time—the fact that there is indeed very little change in the private education system. The old socially



"It's OK, I suppose—that is, if you like your cabbage flambé!"

New exams are no answer

Sir.—Max Morris should realise that Ministers, like the rest of us, can do the right thing for the wrong reason. Their intention after the war may have been to preserve an elite, but the effect was to protect the bulk of ordinary children from subjection to the academic education which external exams inevitably lead to.

We might as well have an industrial nation be better off if exams had not been allowed to turn us all into bookworms (or failed-bookworms) unable to use our hands, or unwilling because we have been taught to consider doing things inferior to knowing about them.

The remedy for elitism is not to be found in concocting new examinations. It is the nature of exams to be academic, and if we are ever again to be a successful, confident nation, we don't want more of that.

JOHN KIRKHAM,
17 Belton Lane,
Grantham, Lincs.

Recruiting for high standards

Sir.—I am not certain whether Mr Eastwell's letter (October 31) was meant to advertise the fact that North Riding College is recruiting badly but this was the impression it gave.

I would like to point out, however, that warmth of welcome does not only go with a scramble for recruits but with a concern for high standards. Thriving institutions also take each individual applicant very seriously.

B. A. JAGGERS
Senior Tutor,
Faculty of Educational Studies,
Oxford Polytechnic.

When beanz meanz bats

Sir.—On returning to school in September, following six weeks of soaking up the English summer, and so suitably depressed, I was overjoyed, as I am sure were many others in the teaching fraternity, to find that in these times of "belt tightening" and "budget cuts" the industry, with a capital "S", was lending a hand with the provision of school equipment. I refer, of course, to the Heins Schools Foundation's "Help Your School Get The Things It Needs", or, as it has become known, the "But Sir, If I Eat Another Bean I'll Bust" campaign.

The details of the campaign are freely available, but in simple terms, the idea is that Heins will exchange educational equipment for their labels, or certain labels, because at least half of them must be endorsed with a picture of Scunthorpe's favourite son, Kevin Keegan.

Although only a small junior school, we started collecting in earnest immediately, and now, some two months later, have amassed enough to "swap" for a size four cricket bat, or even a practice rugby ball. We feel, however, that having considered the possible postage required to send this small mountain of labels, then we will probably remain loyal to our regular bat and ball supplier, or we might even do without.

The crux of this letter is that we don't want the bat but we want the minibus, that stands gleaming on the last page of the foundation's catalogue, for a mere 1.3 million labels. We feel that some needy organization, and there are plenty that struggle far more than we in schools do, could use a new minibus, and so we are going to set-up our school as a collecting point for labels, just to see if we, with a lot of help, can help somebody else get the thing they need.

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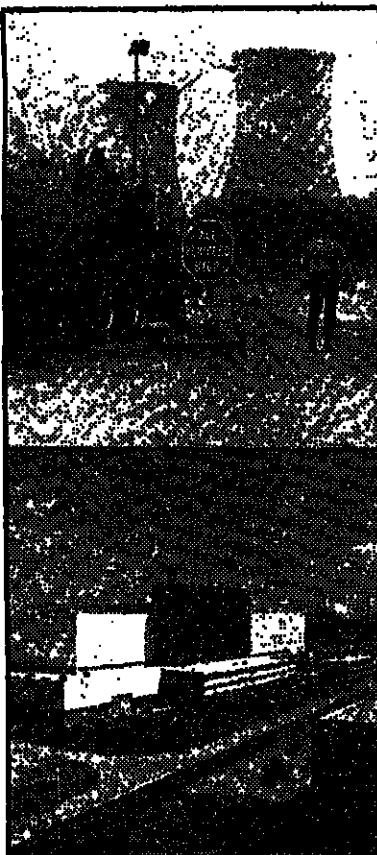
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Science diary

John Maddox

Power struggle



Above—a trailer delivers heavy plant to the Three-Mile Island power station shortly after last year's accident. Below—the prototype fast reactor at Dounreay.

The debate about the rights and wrongs of building nuclear power stations in Britain has always been more genteel than that in the United States, but there is nothing to suggest that it is better controlled. Indeed, I sometimes think it might be better if we in Britain had one of those old-fashioned mud-slinging debates on the American style rather than the curiously patched-up compromise that has helped to take the sting out of the debate on this side of the Atlantic.

With the passage of time but especially in the past ten years, the argument for nuclear power has subtly changed. In the old days, say the early 1960s, the case was subtly different. Nuclear power was cheaper than conventional sources of energy, and was likely to become even more advantageous with the introduction of breeder reactors and the increasing cost of oil and coal. Nuclear power stations built then have turned out to be a boon for the electricity utilities which own them.

Nuclear power is still cheaper than the alternatives—especially oil—but the economic advantage is not nearly as decisive as might be thought from the relative changes in the price of oil (up sixfold) and uranium (up twentyfold). For the capital cost of building nuclear power stations is (or used to be) greater than that of conventional stations, and much of that cost is energy dependent. The result is that capital costs of nuclear power stations have increased quite dramatically (up three or fourfold in real terms).

At the same time, however, people have at last been persuaded that there are strategic and political reasons for seeking a greater degree of independence from oil imports. In a sense, the cost of the alternatives to buying from OPEC is immaterial, for as long as oil purchases remain at or near their present levels, the industrialized states of the world (not to mention the developing countries) will remain vulnerable to the threat of economic disruption on the pattern of 1973 and 1974.

So it would now be logical for the industrialized states to be building as many nuclear power stations as they can afford. France, for what it is worth, is doing precisely that. Elsewhere, the record is not so cheerful. In Britain, the Central Electricity Generating Board, in about to place its first order for a nuclear power station in ten years—an advanced gas-cooled reactor station to be built at Heysham in the northwest. The enthusiastic German building programme of ten years ago has been given pause by the local environmental movement. And in the United States last year's accident at Three-Mile Island has brought the flow of new building orders to a halt.

The British predicament seems to me to be especially absurd. In the hope of forestalling trouble from the opponents of nuclear power, the previous Labour Government—understandably, the novel kinds of nuclear power stations would not be built in Britain without holding a full-scale public inquiry in advance. Since 1972, the Central Electricity Generating Board has wanted to build at least one and possibly several pressurized water reactors, of the general type that went wrong at Three-Mile Island that went wrong at Three-Mile Island.

There is now to be a public inquiry about the wisdom of the proposal, beginning in mid-1982. With luck, the inquiry should be complete by the end of that year, an order for the power station placed at the beginning of 1983 and the reactor opened for service before the end of the decade.

At the same time, however, people have at last been persuaded that there are strategic and political reasons for seeking a greater degree of independence from oil imports. In a sense, the cost of the alternatives to buying from OPEC is immaterial, for as long as oil purchases remain at or near their present levels, the industrialized states of the world (not to mention the developing countries) will remain vulnerable to the threat of economic disruption on the pattern of 1973 and 1974.

But the Government has also agreed that it will not permit the building of a full-scale reactor (along the lines of the 250 megawatt machine that has been working for the past eight years at Dounreay in Scotland) until there has been a public inquiry on that proposal. Since exactly the same people will be involved in both inquiries, and since they are at present up to their eyes in preparations for the first, it seems to be taken for granted that a fast-reactor inquiry could not be held before the end of 1982, perhaps even not until the beginning of 1984, and that the construction of a nuclear power station could not begin until five years from now at the earliest.

actor of the same type somewhere in Britain.

Similar arguments apply to the building of the first full-scale fast reactor, except that in this case the prototype of the proposed machine has been working well in Scotland for a long time. In my opinion, however, the need for a full-scale fast reactor is less more urgent, for the demonstration that the technology actually works would be certain to be a powerful counter in any future negotiations with OPEC states about the price of oil.

It would therefore be well worth while if the Government were, to speak, to renegotiate its implicit agreement with the nuclear industry to hold public inquiries on these two projects before they began. In each case, there is a reason why the building of the machine should entail the building of a whole string of carbon-copies. The need now is merely to discuss how easily the machines can be built, how well they work and how much (or how little) the electricity that they produce will cost.

No doubt there would be risks if the Government elected to let such a course. Plainly, however, it would be better for all concerned that the nuclear industry should be able to get their teeth into the matter, rather than the series of objections to local planning authorities and the security of the machines should be covered rock deposits suitable for long-term storage of radioactive waste.

The good sense of these principles eludes me. One would have expected that those who are suspicious of nuclear power would have come a hard-headed programme of research and development into the disposal of radioactive waste. After all, the sixth report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (the Floor report) was firm in its declaration that one of the most urgent needs in the development of nuclear power was the demonstration of a safe method of disposing of its waste.

Although the present hope is that it will be possible to solidify the waste in blocks of glass and to throw them away in caverns in the ground, it remains to be seen whether the plan will really meet the objections to it.

By opposing the strictly exploratory phase of this programme, the objectors to nuclear power are, of course, implying that they do not want to see the safety of nuclear power demonstrated in any circumstances. By doing so, they give the game away. The objectors are simply to obstruct. In the circumstances, it is hard to see why the Government should feel bound by its predecessor's commitment to public inquiries on two new reactor types when the outcome will be to postpone a proper evaluation of what nuclear power might accomplish in Britain for at least five vital years.

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More than a million words

Many GCE and CSE exams now take in course work, as well as final examination scripts—with proven

and valuable results, argues Jim Sweetman. But there is a danger that the course work system will be drowned in its own success: radical reforms are needed.

Examinations which use coursework folders or folios (the terminologies are interchangeable) for part or all of their final assessment are proliferating. And while examinations of this type are inherently valuable they are in danger of becoming unmanageable, as teachers and examining boards alike are swamped in a mass of A4 paper and manilla files.

This year my school entered 150 children for CSE English literature. Each pupil's folder has to contain at least 15 pieces of work and each piece must be at least 400 words in length. Four of the pieces must be of at least 600 words. Thus the minimum folder length is 6,000 words and since most candidates exceed the minimum, for fear any one of their pieces may be discounted for any reason, even the slimmest folders contain about 7,000 words. The result is that, in the week leading up to the beginning of May, six teachers moderate and assess just more than a million words of handwritten text.

This is just one examination in one subject. There are now a multiplicity of syllabuses which employ coursework to the same degree. The scope of the folder-work varies but history and general studies projects and European studies which match those submitted in literature.

There is also an increasing support for the use of coursework at CSE and A level where the demands in terms of the length of individual pieces are correspondingly greater and where the assessment and moderation process is thereby made even more cumbersome and problematic.

This is unfortunate because the advantages of coursework are clear. In English literature, for example, the folder work represents a more considered, reflective and genuine response to a wider range of writing than does the standard examination. The assessment procedures, initially carried out by the school and internally moderated by the examining board, break down the traditional dualism between teachers and examiners.

The teachers have a greater control over what they teach, while the examiners become involved, even if only marginally, in the process of teaching which the folder reflects. In the classroom the developing folder gives the individual child a unique insight into his or her progress and a clear indication of strengths and weaknesses.

These points far outweigh the traditional and largely misguided complaints about coursework. It is said that it is easier to achieve high grades with coursework, that the folders may get lost, that examining should be left to examiners, that too many meetings are involved and that teachers have neither the time nor the capabilities to examine as well as to teach.



Peter Brooks

tions exhibit few differences, and where there is any marginal improvement with the former it can be directly related to enthusiastic teaching rather than corrupt assessment.

Where folders are used, examination boards are always sympathetic and in genuine cases will award grades on smaller samples of work. The points about examiners are fatuous since the examining system in this country entirely depends on teachers to mark and assess. Finally, coursework assessments, although they may require explanatory and standardizing meetings, also provide an excellent facility for in-service training within a shrinking educational economy. Seeing what other schools do, and how they do it, is an essential part of this training and it is virtually compulsory where coursework is part of an examination.

Thus coursework assessment has much to recommend itself as a consequence of its success. One problem is that to establish its reliability as an assessment instrument a conservatively large sample of work has been demanded. It has also generally been assumed that if writing is not submitted then it has not been undertaken.

Where literature is concerned all the current syllabuses ask for written evidence that prose, poetry and drama have all been studied and insist on a particular balance between them in the final folder. But in most written examinations, any part of the syllabus may be tested but not all of it will be.

The real challenge is to reduce the quantity of text involved in the assessment process. In the traditional written examinations it has been accepted that a candidate's grasp of a subject can be evaluated in perhaps two hours of writing, a maximum of about 1,200 words. Coursework folders involve five or six times this amount.

What is needed is an endeavour to build on the trust between teacher assessors and external moderators, and introduce more effective sampling techniques. Five essays of 400 words plus are quite enough to provide an adequate basis for assessment. Trained markers can quickly determine the standard of a candidate's writing overall in a few pages and it only requires a few more to determine how competently he or she handles information and organizes arguments.

The process is inevitably subjective but it is essentially the same marking process

as for written examinations. There is an evident need for more training, of both assessors and markers, but neither approach is entitled to claim that it possesses more theoretical purity and precision than the other.

Second, the relationship between syllabus and coursework needs to be redefined. It should not be necessary, in an atmosphere of mutual trust, for a coursework sample to represent all the syllabus for a subject. This may be a bitter pill for traditionalists to swallow.

But those same traditionalists have for years relied on examiners not to set questions on certain aspects of the syllabus, not to repeat questions in consecutive years, and they themselves have ignored areas of the syllabus which they find too demanding.

Accepting a greater degree of sampling and limiting the demands of the syllabus may seem like concessions to teachers. In return, teachers must also take steps to make their own internal assessment and its external moderation more workable and effective.

Immediately, the "project" approach must be radically and critically questioned. The slavish copying from books and the emphasis on presentation, rather than on information, has consistently done a disservice to coursework. It is possible for projects to be original, to draw together and synthesize information from a variety of sources, but in too many cases this approach is neither practised nor encouraged.

The conditions under which work is completed should be more carefully controlled and made available to the external assessor. A piece of writing, completed in a certain number of lessons and inspired by a single stimulus, can be a useful guide in assessment without coming to possess the artificiality of an examination question, because it can be related to a continuing classroom context. Finally, the assessment process must be scrupulously implemented by the school. The teachers' order of merit is a vital part of this and inter-teacher agreement is essential to it. Only full discussion and careful collaboration between co-teachers can ensure its validity. Once again this calls for a dialogue of the best and most productive kind.

Unless teachers and examination boards, assessors and moderators, can agree to introduce simpler, simpler techniques and to reduce syllabus constraints it seems unlikely that coursework will continue to expand. The battle to establish the reliability of coursework assessment has now been won. The remaining challenge is to develop procedures which will permit its development as a simple, valid and effective technique of assessing children's performance.

Jim Sweetman is head of English at the Aylesford School, Warwick, and Chief Examiner for the West Midlands JMB 16-plus feasibility study in English.

features

Mr Lyward's sin bin

by Charles Hannam and Norman Stephenson

Things are not well with Education. It is not just the cuts: it is the sense of regression, of falling back to the old divide between the state and the independent sector. When troubled we tend to look back to the past—even though that may not have been all that marvellous.

And indeed, this may be a time to consider the achievements of the past. Many progressive ideas originated in the 1930s and have either been incorporated into our ways of thinking or institutionalized in our schools. Figures like A. S. Neill and George Lyward were influential at that time. A. S. Neill condemned physical assault on children and showed that a school could be run without beating. Now there is less beating (except in Scotland). Instead we have counselling, behaviour modification and "sin bins" (more than 150 in inner London alone).

Neill and Lyward were both headmasters of Public School "sin-bins". Lyward is less well known; he did not write as much as Neill and was less skilled in publicizing his work. About the only thing there is the book about him by Michael Burn called *Mr Lyward's Answer* and published by Hamish Hamilton in 1956.

He occasionally lectured, looking rather like a clerical gentleman in grey suit and black shoes, silver-haired, distinguished and with natural authority. Not a bit like Neill who looked as if he had been carved out of knobby wood, tie all over the place and one wing of his shirt collar sticking up.

Different people, but both were after the same sort of thing: to liberate young people to be themselves, to allow them space between themselves and their parents. They felt that their pupils—in Lyward's case the term "patients" might be more appropriate—needed to be helped to regain a sense of their own autonomy, to resist being put down by authority figures. Lyward took boys when schools had failed to cope, first from the independent sector then, in due course, from local authorities. In the 1940's and 1950's, when everything else failed and psychiatrists had influence, boys of good intelligence might end up at Finchden Manor where Mr Lyward had his school.

It seems that all the boys who came to

Finchden Manor had one thing in common: parents or those in authority over them had made them lead lives that were not their own. Boys when sent to Lyward were often preceded by letters, for example this from a headmaster: "I found that he had been stealing, smoking, breaking bounds and instructing other boys in the art of masturbation. It is quite impossible to get him to tell the truth. I and other masters had to persecute him fairly systematically for laziness and I had to beat him two or three times."

There is a degree of control which makes young people unable to function and things may not have changed all that much. There must still be many a parent who might write: "Our boy has no ambition to be on top of his class. He is third from the bottom, but he must go up."

An elder brother wrote to another, who eventually wanted to join the Services: "In the Army you will be carefully watched... those thought lacking will be returned to their proud parents with a polite note 'Removed as unlikely ever to become an officer'... The British Empire has plenty of tombstones to men who halted at the wrong place and who failed to put out sentries and scouts."

Like a corset

Authority imposed from the outside is like a corset: it constrains, giving the illusion of containment, but doing nothing to remedy the problems that call for it. The casualties are not just the ones who fail to become "officer material". They are also the truants, the vandals and the under-achievers in schools who compulsively behave badly as if the only way they can say "this is who I am" is to challenge authority and even to fight it all the way.

Lyward's boys seemed, because they had been nagged, bullied and dominated, to have lost that inner sense of security which more or less sustains most of us. When they came to Finchden Manor they were suspicious, lonely and compelled to behave badly. Lyward and the teachers who worked with him, tried to create a sense of space, to give the boys time to develop or restore a sense of self.

The outside world demanded a cure in the medical sense but in fact the kind of therapy and teaching which was prac-

tised at Finchden Manor could guarantee nothing of the sort. The boys' "illness" included uncertainty about their relationship with authority. Their experience seemed to lead them to believe that their only response to the adult saying "I have the power to punish you" was the reply, "I have the power to make you punish me". They had to test adult power. One of Lyward's responses was to react in ways which upset their assumptions, with a seeming unpredictability.

Lyward: "He might ask if he could go to the cinema." Almost certainly only we must keep the "almost" he will get the reply "yes" and before he has time to say more he will be told, "and I will see your meal is kept for you". The emphasis was on the flexibility that was needed in the response to the individual's needs—even to the point of "unfairness". The next boy who asked to go to the cinema might well be refused without explanation.

Administrative convenience in schools demands, in the name of justice, that all should be treated the same. Exceptions are thought to damage the fabric of society. "Special cases make bad law" is the defence of the anxious teacher (or indeed the parent in the family). Lyward had an inner confidence which enabled him to accommodate the varying needs of individuals.

He did not pretend that equality existed where manifestly it did not: "no" had to be said when something had gone far enough or when the child did not really want what he was asking for. His firmness helped his boys to understand that the power of the adult could provide some stability and was not only to be seen as a source of punishment and of guilt.

Lyward's great skill was to distinguish between the symbolic and the real in the boys' behaviour. Sometimes a demand had to be accepted at face value, at others to be interpreted at a deeper level. At one point he observes, for instance: "All maladjusted children are thieves of one sort or another, though not all in the legal sense; they spend what they haven't got of energy, money or courage on what they do not really need." It is precisely this kind of sensitivity which is difficult to achieve and practise in conventional schools. At Finchden Manor the staff were able to provide teaching and therapy.

Lyward confessed that he had not taught formally for more than 20 years, but in fact he was a good teacher. Burn calls him the Diaghilev of examination preparation. He taught the boys who

were ready for public examinations very successfully. In meticulous handwriting he would produce charts and aids to memory and he had above all the gift to relate what the boys were learning to their own experience. He gave a new meaning to learning by heart—facts were never dissociated from feelings. There were few formal lessons but there were conversations, drama and painting.

No nagging

"Hurry and accumulation are the enemy of creative education", he said. There was no formal assessment of work, no imposition of external standards of achievement and so a respite from the nagging which accompanies all this. There was time for genuine involvement and a desire to learn to develop. One boy spent several weeks doing nothing but cycling round wearing a Chinese hat and in Finchden Manor the staff could afford to wait.

Lyward believed that we haunt young people with long-term goals (to grow up, to be mature) instead of ensuring that each step has a relevance and an immediacy which keep them interested so that they attain their goals still fresh and cooperative. One thing observable about maladjusted children is that they use so much energy for their unconscious rebelliousness that they have none left for the conventional pursuits of the school.

Those we make jump through academic hoops which are not meaningful to them are liable to cut themselves off from the real world. Lyward wrote on the dangers of this: "They produce large scale enterprises to small scale through panic they fall for totalitarianism of one sort or another."

What Lyward achieved makes sense, given his relatively small scale of operation, the sort of boy he took and the unique quality of his personality. Certainly there are individual teachers working in our schools who possess this kind of sensitivity and humanity in their dealings with children.

The question we have to ask is, how far do the increasing bureaucracy of "man-management" of our schools threaten this? There is a need for stability and the security which it brings to children who need it to function effectively as learners and human beings. But it will always be the case that the imaginative response to individual needs will sometimes conflict with administrative convenience. Mr Lyward is important because he reminds us what the real issues are.

The right to be different

by Sasha Moorsom

Discover *Ithaca, the Heart of the Finger Lakes*, says the notice as you approach it in upper New York State through what looks like good farming country, with red painted barns that demonstrate the links many of the farming families have with Scandinavia. What I discovered in Ithaca, quite unexpectedly, was that it is one of the rare places where you can educate a child from six to eighteen at "alternative" schools flourishing within the public system, all paid for by the state.

The longest standing has been the elementary one, East Hills, started in 1970 in an old building scheduled for closing because the school roll was falling. A group of Cornell University parents determined not only to keep it open, but to make it a radical alternative to conventional elementary education.

Once successful, they naturally wanted a junior high school for their children to go on to from 12 to 14. The "new junior high programme" has now been running for six years for 70 children. A year and a half ago a senior high opened extending the programme for the 15 to 18 age-group now numbering around 65 children.

I sat in on a meeting to discuss applications for teaching posts. At the meeting were three students, a parent, two teachers, an ex-teacher, and the principal, David Lehman, who heads both schools together. The composition of this committee was representative of the crucial concern behind alternative schooling—that all decisions should be made between students, parents and teachers.

This principle is fundamental. All must be able to participate in defining, modifying and revising the actual programme. Above all, every student must have a voice in his or her own education.

I asked, enviously, how it was that such schools could be set up within the public system in America, and was told that, if there was a section of the public who wanted this kind of education, did not they have a right—as tax-payers—to have it? This, at any rate, had been how the case was argued.

The responsibility for schools in America is much more decentralized than here. The law of each state governs them, not federal law, which in itself allows for greater variety. But within each

state the schools of any given district are managed by the local board of education, nine members, unpaid, elected, in this case by the 60,000 people of Ithaca, to look after their 17 schools. The board can be more sensitive and responsive to local needs and preferences than our local education authorities, but introducing any innovation is as much of a political struggle as it is here. There can be tension between members of the board and the administration.

Patience is needed, staying power and long-term commitment. How did the parents committed to "alternative" schooling achieve as much as they have in Ithaca? First, with the help of a dedicated group of students, parents and teachers organizing their political support, they won election to the board. A sympathetic superintendent enabled them to start an alternative junior high as a joint university and district project.

But, with hindsight, it is clear that not enough careful preparation was made before the school opened. For two and a half years it had a stormy existence bedevilled by resigning heads, inadequate buildings and a hostile local John Birch Society, who conducted a campaign in the newspapers and on local radio against a school where, they claimed, freedom had become licence.

Fighting back

A new superintendent easily found legal ground on which to close it. The outraged parents and students fought back. Before the school could re-open, the board insisted on a blueprint being drawn up by an appointed planning committee that had to weigh up and circumvent all the criticisms that had been levelled against the school in its previous existence.

The committee's brief was to plan for the learning programme, the selection of pupils, staffing and to define overall goals: all of which had to meet the legal requirements of secondary education in the State of New York. The state education department had itself published a report on its educational system in which it regretted that "the goals of education... are not now being fully achieved by all students. While this is most obvious for many of those in lower socio-

economic groups in urban areas, it is also true for many others who are now not well served by the traditional programs in all schools." On these grounds the report urged the provision of what it called "optional learning environments". The goal of the "new junior program" was to do just that.

The planning committee proposed that the school should only open if the board agreed to its lasting at least two and a half to three years. Without this commitment, both staff and children would feel too insecure. They considered, too, that the students should approximate to the "heterogeneity of the Ithaca community in terms of race, economic status and academic ability". This commitment is one factor that has kept the school board's support. They also stressed that systematic evaluation of achievements should be built into the programme. The board decided to take the risk of opening the school.

Social mix

Both senior and junior high are housed on the same campus as the "straight" high school, in an area where a large number of Ithaca's black community live. They share some facilities such as the cafeteria, the gymnasium, the swimming pool and the library, but also use the resources of the neighbourhood outside for yoga, karate and bowling. The social mix is approximately 40 per cent working-class parents and 35 per cent professional, the rest somewhere in between.

Anyone can apply to attend and the decision is based on a discussion between headmaster, child and parents to see if school and student match up. Some are children who have failed in other schools, some are in care and live in group homes, some are on probation, some have behaviour problems.

David Lehman and his staff have also been careful to keep meticulous records on all students which are open to scrutiny by them and their parents and available to the school's evaluator, a respected academic from Syracuse University, to whom they are presented anonymously to preserve each student's privacy. The school's commitment to the principle that "participatory democracy is essential in education, that parents and students should have a voice in running their own schools" is a strong selling point with many people.

The teachers, except for David Lehman, are almost all under 30. They can only be hired for a year, and they have no tenure and no pension rights. None the less there are plenty of applicants. The

meeting I sat in on was sifting through 56 of them—on the look-out, apart from basic qualifications, for someone who could "play a five-string guitar or make left-handed pottery—real neat things like that", but above all the ability to "make out well in the fray".

The board pays for 7.5 teachers which meets the regulation ratio of 18.65 students per teacher. The school then chooses to employ 15 part-time teachers in order to cover as many subjects and skills as possible. A further 10 parents and university students come in regularly to help, and many children are linked up with people outside for certain skills experience not available in school.

The internal organization of the school is based on family grouping. Each teacher/counsellor (they double the roles) has eight to 10 people who have chosen their group. They eat together, do things together socially, and have regular twice weekly discussion meetings. The work programme runs on a nine-week cycle.

Every nine weeks the programme curriculum committee prepares a long list of 50 or more options for the whole school to look at. (They start this two weeks before the end of the nine-week cycle.) Everyone makes their comments on this master list and, on the basis of these, it is then formulated into a plan, which goes round to each pupil in the form of a course-catalogue.

People mark off what they want to do. They are also asked to mark what they would like to teach—for example, boxing or the saxophone, if they have the skill. The family-group counsellor then works out an individual programme for each child and checks it with the parent, making sure nobody misses out on the core subjects of reading, writing and maths.

The senior groups follow the same principle of working out an individual programme for each student, but with more emphasis on the concept of the "outside community as classroom", so that work-experience in different occupations and professions is an important part of learning. Since a senior high of only 65 students is too small to offer all the academic subjects, languages and some other subjects are taken as options at Ithaca High School.

The experiment in Ithaca is just one of many developing in America. The authorities are beginning to be less rigid in what they allow to happen—or have they just reached a point of greater desperation? If tax-payers want state-funded alternatives, as David Lehman says, why can't they have them?



Cream teas and job chances

by Kristina Cooper

"The Old Postern Cream Teas", says the sign. The setting is idyllic—brightly coloured tables and chairs set out on the lawn of a picturesque medieval manor. But it is not Greer Garson who appears bearing the clotted cream, but Cheryl. Cheryl has three-tone hair, black triangles for eyebrows and a penchant for bondage trousers. She is also one of the 45 young people living at the Old Postern and taking part in a new government-subsidized job opportunity scheme, run by the Dartington Trust.

The prospectus for the place makes it sound more like a rather trendy finishing school (it is full of words like "encouraging", "individual development" and "personal communication"). And if the majority of them are unemployed school-leavers, there is also a sizable con-

tingent of fee payers, whose parents are paying £2,000 each for their offspring "to develop an awareness of the realities of work" and to learn "to build a bridge between school and adult life".

The catch-22 situation for most school-leavers applying for their first job is that they have no experience to offer. The Postern scheme gives them an opportunity to learn skills and gain useful references. For while Cheryl serves cream teas, Heather is learning all about printing at the litho works and Alastair is beavering away in the gardens at Dartington Hall. These work assignments last from four to six weeks and all the posterners, as they are known, are sent on several during their six-month stay.

Stuart Lindeman is the education person. Long and lean and full of fun,

he looks and sounds suspiciously like one of those wonderful caring social workers. Geoff Dowson, his colleague who arranges the work placements and careers advice, is the one wearing a suit. Stuart says:

"It's important that the kids... I mean the posterners—they're hardly kids any more... get to find out what working actually means. Some of them say they want to work outside, but... getting up early every morning when it's cold and dark and wet to go and work for a market gardener or farmer... soon dispels any illusions."

"I also think it's important that they tackle at least one job that they either positively dislike, or one that they never would have thought of doing." At the moment Trisram, one of the posterners, is working as a playgroup leader much

to the amusement of everybody. "Discipline in general is minimal here, we are very strict about lateness and the absenteeism. If anyone skives from work or is late, we dock money from their wages/pocket money just like they would on the shop floor. If that doesn't work, we follow normal industrial procedures, up to firing them from the programme." That has happened in three cases so far.

Mark is a punk like Cheryl. He has spiky dyed black hair and wears a dark collar and amulets. He used to work for the council in the parks before he was made redundant. He loved making the fancy ornamental flower beds. "I quite difficult you know. Plants have a mind of their own. Sometimes they grow all strangely."

When he finishes at the Old Postern he is hoping to get some sort of qualification so he can go back to working in his wayward plants. At the moment, however, he is working in the kitchen. "It's great, except for washing up."

The posterners come from all over



Andy is 17, and going to Cambridge University in the autumn to study physics. There are two deaf and dumb boys—the former who employed them on their last work assignment was furious when they were moved on, as they were his best workers.

The work assignments are only part of the scheme. Stuart explained: "All the time you are at school you are told what to do. Here we try to give the kids a chance to make their own decisions. They don't place really... On Friday afternoon we have a general meeting to discuss community problems... usually they bring things like complaints about noisy handbikes. I don't think they realize how much power they've got."

The meetings are always chaired by one of the posterners, which can be very frustrating for me, as I have to sit there and say nothing, even if they're all mucking about and taking hours to make a decision that would take me two minutes. But I do believe it is the learning experience that is important, not just the decision."

The houseparents are as varied as the

posterners. Most of them have normal jobs during the day, but they are there in the evenings and the weekends. They are not paid but they receive free board and lodgings. Why do they do it?

Anna is a 24-year-old graduate who works as a secretary in Exeter, 30 miles away. "They're such great kids. I come back from work feeling awful and there's always someone who's there with a smile, asking you if you've had a good day. It can be tiring though, as you can't escape. You'll be just about to crawl into bed and there'll be one of them outside your door, wanting to talk to clear off. But she says: 'I think it's really important for them to talk to someone who's older, yet who they can still identify with, someone who they feel can understand their problems.'"

On Tuesdays there is a weekly discussion group in Stuart's room. Stuart explained how it started. "There's a rule against smoking dope for obvious reasons and, a while ago, I got a delegation from the posterners complaining about this. We had a talk... drugs, drug abuse,

you know... I explained our position as a government-subsidized body... we could get closed down if we were caught breaking the law. Afterwards they came back and thanked me and asked if we could meet more often and talk about things like this."

"This is the second programme and we are learning all the time. During the last programme we organized a lot of evening activities but now we leave it much more up to them. At first there was a period when they were all getting very bored and I was very tempted to step in and organize something, but they seem to have got over it now."

"We tell them what's available, provide the transport, if necessary, and then it's up to them to make use of it. How to use your leisure, well, that's something you're not taught at school and it's something that's going to be very important in all our lives."

For many the six months are up all too soon and they are out in the world on their own. What do they learn? Skills of course, but perhaps something more important. Heather, sounding

rather like Stuart, says it is "tolerance". "You have to learn to get on with people, even if they're different from you."

Andy might never meet Elvis of Cheryl again. But what he will have learnt from them, and they from him will last him long after the micro-chip will have made even a physics graduate redundant. The Postern programme currently has 56 kids, 35 sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission and 21 fee-payers. What do they (not to mention the tax-payers) get for their money? Besides working in 70-odd businesses, between them they will be sitting 42 CSEs and O levels. Roy Robinson, the programme's director, came from the management development side of industry, principally with GEC.

He says: "The programme is based on a realistic assessment of present employment conditions, and a hard-headed look at how the education system prepares young people to face them. We've also considered the demands we need to make as a community to make people grow up. Everybody here learns from everyone else—and everybody here grows."

talkback

Handling Information

Terence Brake

The ability to locate, retrieve, select, organize, evaluate and communicate information will increasingly become a major component of what we understand the terms "literacy" and "education" to mean.

Many pupils leave school unable to manipulate even our most traditional information sources—books and libraries. As we launch ourselves into the science fiction realms of the new technology, we must keep the present realities within our field of vision.

Over the past two decades several educational innovations have been introduced—resource and inquiry based learning, CSE Mode 3, project work and independent learning—which although they have taken different forms in different contexts, rest on the principle of active learn-

ing, wherein the process of learning is as important as the content. Hence the phrase "learning how to learn".

Many of these innovations have opened up a number of "skill gaps". For instance, it is one of the aims of resource-based learning that pupils should gain information directly from various resources, without the mediation of the teacher.

I am not questioning this objective; however, pupils cannot effectively use a resource as an information source, or interact with it directly, unless they have acquired certain competencies in information seeking and handling.

Where such innovations have been introduced (in varying degrees), teachers often complain about the inability of pupils to tackle projects, that they simply "copy chunks out of books" or "can't look things up". If we are going to take these innovations seriously, we must look more carefully at the skills and attitudes that are assumed when such tasks are set.

"Study skills" is a fashionable phrase which covers some of the

ground, but tends to trap information-handling skills within an "academic" setting. The ability to find and use information should be as much an aspect of social education and everyday living as it is of an activity called "studying".

Such considerations have been instrumental in the setting up of the information skills in the curriculum research unit, funded for three years by the British Library. The aim of the unit is to help create opportunities in school subjects for the introduction, exercise and development of a wide range of information skills.

The central principle is that the skills needed to find and use information must be introduced and reinforced across the curriculum within the normal day-to-day practice of teaching. Computer skills, library skills, life skills, study skills—all touch on aspects of the project's concerns. But treating them individually does not help to develop consciousness of information and its role in society and individual lives, nor does it help to develop a coherent picture of the kinds of skills and attitudes

that will help us to control our developing information society (as the Japanese call it). Over the next two years the unit will be involved in action research with approximately 30 to 40 teachers, librarians and media resources officers in six inner London comprehensive schools.

The teachers, all of whom have expressed a need for this kind of innovation, range across English and drama, integrated studies, history, science, maths and computing, and social education. The unit's main work will be in creating relevant materials for teachers and pupils.

Although it is possible to isolate individual skills and teach them in their own right, e.g. problem formulation, tracing sources, skimming and scanning information sources, selecting and recording information, creating, evaluating and communicating information—the unit is concerned to place such skills within the overall framework of "doing research". In an age which bombards us with information and misinformation, we must all become our own researchers.

Terence Brake is project director at the Information Skills in the Curriculum Research Unit, ILCS, Centre for Learning Resources.



Down with Gujarati

Kishor Patel

Is the educational system creating apartheid in Britain? We condemn South Africa on its apartheid policies, yet a similar process is happening right under our noses.

When dealing with black and brown children, it is crucial to remember the frustrations and problems faced by the first generation of immigrants to this country. Some encountered language difficulties (particularly those from the Indian sub-continent), but most suffered a culture shock.

The system will, I fear, create a similar situation of confusion in the second generation children. Let me cite the example of the Indian community.

It is now possible to take an O level in Gujarati. "Saturday morning" classes sprang up in Leicester to meet this need in Indian children to rush out and learn their mother tongue; in many cases, necessary for communicating with their grandparents.

The parents of these children are bilingual—thus there is no need for the child to learn his mother tongue as far as the immediate family circle is concerned. Instead of encouraging the adults to learn English, we are putting pressure on the children to learn the language which will only be useful in the minority group to which they belong.

For instance, Muslim adults are not able to communicate with Gujarati adults in Urdu or Gujarati—they have to use English. The same applies to the second generation children, if we continue to put pressure on them to show their ability by learning and pass-

ing O levels in their mother tongue. Research in Leicester has shown that the language programme has improved the attainment of school children whose parents come from the Indian sub-continent. This is to be applauded; but success at school ignores the failure/frustration these children will face when they leave school—or indeed the 17 hours they spend outside school each day. By encouraging these children to learn their mother tongue, we are segregating the population.

There are bars and clubs in Leicester where it is a positive advantage if one speaks, say, Gujarati. How long before we have segregation at the school level? How long before Gujaratis go to one school, Muslims to another and the West Indian black children to yet another?

How long before subjects (not only the mother tongue) are taught in the language of the minority groups? Far fetched? Then let me draw your attention to the recommendations made in a report by a joint working party of members of the National Association for Multicultural Education and Northamptonshire Education Authority. (The TES April 25).

(a) more ad hoc existing help mother tongue teaching groups; (b) mother tongue classes provided by the adult education service; (c) a wider range of books in other languages; (d) working parties to produce materials to help with maintaining the mother tongue in primary schools. I am particularly concerned with this emphasis on "primary schools"—these children do not need to learn their mother tongue as their parents already use English to a large extent. It is not uncommon to find children born in this country who speak only English, but whose parents are bilingual.

Kishor Patel is a PGCE student in the department of education, University of Cambridge.



Axe-grinder Hamster horrors

I was recently shown a pamphlet entitled *Animals and Plants in Schools: Guidelines for Health and Safety*. This prompted me to reflect that it was a pity the I.A.S. could not give it to the animals and plants themselves. After all, there are few living things, animal or vegetable, that can survive for long unscathed in schools.

We have all seen etiolated beans and shrivelled cress in saucers of mouldering blotting paper; we have all heard the sickening crunch as yet another stick insect meets its Maker beneath the patier of tiny feet.

The interests of the animals themselves seem sometimes to be of secondary importance, as they struggle to survive in the alien world of the classroom. I once sat on an examination board which spent 20 minutes arguing whether a student-teacher should be failed because she had not noticed that a child was torturing a hamster in the far corner of the room. The hamster later succumbed—I cannot

remember the fate of the student, but I do recall that no one asked what the examiner had done about it.

At the other extreme, I met three children who proudly announced that they were the Tadpole Monitors. Ample evidence of their excessive and rival zeal was to be found in the aquarium near by, whose tiny inhabitants were struggling through a layer of more or less liquid bread-crumbs. To emphasize their responsibility, each monitor flung yet another layer of food upon their hapless charges.

But there is occasionally something more about animals in schools than mere life or (more often) death. There is a significant world of culture and socialization. In one primary school I was surprised to find a collection of shaggy gerbils (properly housed in a large sand-filled vivarium) referred to as "The Desert Rats". Two large specimens were named "Romney" and "Only when I met the deputy head with greying military moustache (and faraway look in his eye), did I realise why.

The same school had managed to establish a sort of "legged" hamster, which roamed their quarters in rapid triplet rhythm. The teacher felt obliged to embark upon some elementary genetics. "You see," she explained, "Pinky had some babies together, but because they're close relations..." "Miss," interrupted a Cypriot child, "my cousin's got married. Sunday. What happens to their babies?"

But worse horror in nature's struggle for survival in the classroom came from Giorgio. This round and cheerful six-year-old Italian wiled away one playtime by placing baby gerbils in the oven and baking them to a crisp finish. Commentator, Tardul Monty and Comedian, Tardul Monty, the confused teacher.

Giorgio is interviewed at length by the head, with many deep

questions ("How are things at home, Giorgio?"). An appointment is made with the Educational Psychologist. The deputy head (who is privately and mutters about how side they were on anyway each chips were down.

The mother is summoned to inform of the deed. "Glorious good boy," she claims. "Our little old, mice everywhere. We got him 10p for every one he kills." Defeated by this multiplicity of diversity, the teacher gave a deceased a hero's funeral, at which, foolishly, to "Things like to eat". Fresh from college he searched for vivid words and no live examples.

Giorgio produced the delightful crumpling up roost songbirds as long as coach trip in Italy. Two African pupils spoke of grubs, caterpillars and giant snails, but it was still intestines that finally drove the teacher back to the actor and wretched theme of "People who live us".

The Guidelines also contained a fascinating code on the recognition of certain "suspicious substances". The schoolkeeper at the local constant on enforcing all regulations to the letter, checked the roach substance, growing in health and profusion. The schoolkeeper leading on the evacuation of the adjacent rooms, lest moral contagion should set in.

By the next day, the greenhouse had been cleared. The inclination at the back of the school was unusually active that afternoon. The head was anxious to avoid a sort of publicity, but as a strange smell wafted around, some of the younger staff became a little uneasy over their CSE poetry lessons.

So one way and another, and living things in schools end up dead. Wreathed from their natural habitat, and transplanted into a world that seems sometimes neither to care nor understand about life beyond its walls, they wither and perish. Very like knowledge, really.

Children of the estate

Bill Boyle

The Ford Estate, one of three sprawling on the rural outskirts of Birkbeck, was built as an essential rehousing area for displaced residents of the town. This shifting of population was necessitated by slum clearance and town centres development in the middle sixties.

The new occupants of the estate found themselves isolated from their familiar haunts in the town, and largely dependent upon inconsistent and inadequate public transport for communication with the outside world. They were drawn from widely dispersed and disparate parts of Birkbeck, which made their integration into a new community even more difficult.

Other contributory factors to the atmosphere of discontent are the

demonizing malaise of high unemployment, deplorable provision of leisure amenities for the young, and inadequate shopping facilities. Not surprisingly, the estate has developed a reputation as the main problem area of all the Birkbeck housing projects, and some in the rivaling Kirkby's rate of self-destruction through vandalism.

The eyes of the children growing up on the estate reflect the cynicism of their parents towards the area and its restricted life.

"Writing on the walls." Gossip everywhere. One O'Clock. Gm, have you heard about that?

They've driven the old man out, Shaving windows. You vandals! Terrible isn't it, it's damn terrible. My kid fell on the playground the other day.

Mums complaining. Bunkie night's the worst. They come round pinching your fences. Tommy just got stuck in Ford Towers' lifts.

Now it's night time. Every one in bed. Vandalism came out. Smashing windows. I heard they battered an old lady up and took her bread. It's terrible.

This extract from a poem by Joanne (age 11) chronicles incidents she has observed or experienced on the estate from the siege of the local pub by underage youths, through the eternal problem of the broken lifts in the flats, to the increasing violence on the streets from the frustrated young unemployed.

The young adolescent leaves school only to hang around the avenues or the precinct waiting for what? The days are spun out by the adults, all leaning out and waited before their time. Gossiping women in curlers and dirty aprons.

That one in number 27 having another baby. She can't look after the four she's got already. My Arthur says them that ave lots

of kids batter them. Number 43 got broken into. Oh yeah, that's the one that thinks she owns the world.

Over four hundred pounds got taken. This short segment from Lindsey's poem (age 12) illustrates nearly the narrowness that the estate has forced upon the people; the pre-emptive feeling is always that the inhabitants are constantly looking to escape. As Lindsey continues: Desolate landscapes, vandals! Chip papers flutter like milky white butterflies.

Pepsi Cola cans roll white like butterflies. Broken glass glinting, captured-star like.

Mud-streaked skies, dirty gray corners. White writing on walls. Windows barred. Keeping vandals as prisoners.

The children are acutely aware of the problems of conquering the local authority to provide more amenities. "People say that if you plant more trees or make flower beds on

the estate, the vandals will stop rip them out. But is this a good enough reason for the area to be neglected and left in the depressing state that it is now?

"We realize that much of the damage is done by the large number of unemployed youths with time on their hands, and this will be the argument against brightening up the estate with flowers and replanting."

Those comments from four 12-year-old girls (Lynn, Sueanne, Paul and Jackie) put the problem very clearly, but the local authority, cannot offer any real solution, instead, ending with what articulates the plight of estate dwellers countrywide.

"Don't ignore us. We are beaten for the estate to be given another chance. The young people of Ford and the adults of tomorrow and need a pleasant environment to grow up in."

Bill Boyle is head of English at Manor Middle School, Birkbeck, Marylebone.

Children's books

Marriages of true minds

Naomi Lewis recommends a variety of picture books

The marriage of text and picture in books for the very young is like a marriage: good, bad, marriage, so-so, wearing together, and time to be ended without regret. They need not be equal in length, but those for the very young, in a special case: almost all that read homes or libraries will be looked at often and remembered long.

Something from them—a story, a detail, maybe—might one join that hidden furniture in the mind which a lifetime will not dislodge. Acceptances and beliefs, bedded in like "taste", can have their origins here. "Familiarity" are no longer funny (plenty of sensitivity here today) but circus animals are still (alas) a good joke, and wolves, undesiredly, villains. Here is an area that needs no investigation.

What is not so often realized is the sheer range of fantasy that picture books and nursery rhymes offer—the wildest flights of imagination that readers are ever likely to meet again. No wonder the Tolkien and other magic purveyors can later take such a hold. Well below is a fair selection of "good" current picture books; immensely varied in style and kind, all deserve to have readers.

The Three Magic Gifts by James Macdonald and Errol Le Cain (Kaye and Ward £2.25) is the largest and certainly one of the handsomest. Continuously spacey, it is a journey take in its quite long Russian fairy tale text—how Ivan the Rich keeps telling the magic gifts from gullems Ivan the Poor, until magic turns to rebels. Fine episodes here for the child's imagination.

The pictures demonstrate all of the Wildsmith manner, the harlequin patterns, the bright attack, the feeling animal portraits. There is a bonus, too, a working blueprint of a spaceship. Fairies look as fairies should in Elinor Baskin's *The Sun Egg* (Bantam £3.50) the first publication here of one of the most attractive picture books by this Scandinavian artist (1874-1893). The elves and gnomes in a wood find an orange, dropped by a little boy. A sun-egg, can it be? They learn the delicious truth from a bird which knows what Andersen called "the warm countries". In the big woodland paintings, with life-size detail, fairies are fairlike (as I have said): old gnomes are more Merlin than Disney; the "ancient" restaurant has a notice: GUESTS ARE FORBIDDEN TO EAT EACH OTHER. A real child's book, seen at childlevel.

comes to the farm. But saucy young tractor ignores him—until the rainy spring when his wheels are stuck in the mud. Humour and pathos, action, hope, reward. Against their bright uncluttered pictures, with their clarity, space and distances, the very few characters can take all the reader's attention.

Another such success, though totally different, is *Tomte de Paola's The Cat on the Dovrefell* (Methuen £3.50). Text—a Norse folk tale from the Daset collection—tells how a traveller, taking a great white bear to the King of Denmark, contrives to rid a haunted house of trolls. (They think the huge, though amiable bear a cat.) Ah, those trolls... Very precise with their strong outline and magenta colouring, the pictures should keep all six to eight in a fearful joy for days. This splendid book should make a good schoolroom play-troll-roles for every one.

Oddly, it is the plot which speeds on the pictures, vivid and bright though they are, in the new book by Brian Wildsmith: *Professor Noah's Spaceship* (Oxford £3.50). This artist has recently shown much more attention to subject than in his earlier works, when his striking style was enough in itself. From an extrovert six to eight viewpoint even, his present theme would be hard to beat. The forest animals, made homeless by pollution and human advance, join Professor Noah on his projected spaceship journey to a new planet. But a guidance-fair is bent, and they land, after 40 days and 40 nights, on—yes!—their own planet Earth, but many centuries earlier, cleaner and greener.

Now we must keep it that way. The pictures demonstrate all of the Wildsmith manner, the harlequin patterns, the bright attack, the feeling animal portraits. There is a bonus, too, a working blueprint of a spaceship. Fairies look as fairies should in Elinor Baskin's *The Sun Egg* (Bantam £3.50) the first publication here of one of the most attractive picture books by this Scandinavian artist (1874-1893). The elves and gnomes in a wood find an orange, dropped by a little boy. A sun-egg, can it be? They learn the delicious truth from a bird which knows what Andersen called "the warm countries". In the big woodland paintings, with life-size detail, fairies are fairlike (as I have said): old gnomes are more Merlin than Disney; the "ancient" restaurant has a notice: GUESTS ARE FORBIDDEN TO EAT EACH OTHER. A real child's book, seen at childlevel.

The Bear in the Boat by Wilhelm Scholte (Dent £3.50) is at once simple and subtle: a perfect book (with its brief sufficient text) for an adult and very young child to journey through together. First cartoon picture shows an empty sky. A pink butterfly appears. Now a yellow one. A cloud. Another. Why, there is the sea. And a boat. And a bear... a dog... an island... snow... penguins... another bear... So we move on, one thing at a time, to the charming if enigmatic close.

Three different seasonal notes are rung by the next three excellent books. I highly praise for Graham Oakley's *The Church Mice at Christmas* (Macmillan £3.95). Yes, it's the same set of characters, but the book is as visually exciting as any of its half-dozen predecessors. What richness in these pictures! The mice provide the action (they try to earn funds for a party) but the cat, their gentle protector, by his sheer expressive appearance, inspires the range of emotions that make these books stay in the minds of under eights.

In *Hugo and the Ministry of Holidays* (Andersen £2.95) Tony Ross allies his customary dazzling pictures with, as so often, a wildly ingenious tale. Hugo, that egregious mouselet of earlier Ross books, has written to Santa requesting a blackboard and eggs. What does he find but an Easter egg! Some confusion here. He starts up the chimney, follows the trail of an endless knitted woolen scarf, and arrives at the source of the problem, the gift-giving Ministry, where he offers a plan for sorting out the chaos. This, exhilarating book will do (I should add) not only for Christmas but, for Easter, birthdays and all such occasions.

The strength of *A Winter Story* (Kestrel £4.50) comes not so much from Max Bolliger's narrative as from Beatrix Schären's pictures, with their striking woodcut manner and their dramatic winter colouring. On a cold night the farmer refuses to take in the little herdsboy. The boy goes towards a distant light. The animals follow the boy. The suspicious farmer follows the animals.

... could say that Bill Gilham's *Septimus Fry F.R.S.* (Deutsch £4.95) dips straight into the everyday life of now. But wait. Watchingly, Mrs Fry a very ordinary housewife, gets ideas above her very ordinary family's station (mentally speaking) and gives birth to the cleverest baby in the world. He writes his first letter to *The Times* at six months; at one he deceivers a baffling Ancient Egyptian text in the British Museum; at two he becomes a Fellow of the Royal Society. He is of course still in his push chair. The end is strange, and interesting. Steve Augarde illustrates with humour, wit and perception, especially capturing the troubled infant face of the little prodigy.

Mr Archimedes' Bath by Pamela Allen (Bodley Head £3.50) is a large funny book whose comedy will please the outrageous taste of four



This has been a prolific year for Russell Hoban. Besides his much discussed adult novel *Riddly Walker*, he has published no less than four children's books recently. This illustration, by Byron Barton, is from *Arthur's New Power* (Gollancz £3.50), a sequel to *Dinner at Albert's*, which introduced the *Cracodile* family with their pop-mad, tubertal son, Arthur. The jokes this time are mainly about the family's dependence on electronic knick-knacks (hard then are forced to eat in a Chinese restaurant, having blown all the fuses at home!) and to constitute a strain of adult satire. These books ought to fall between two stools, but as grown-ups enjoy reading them and children love naughty, anthropomorphic reptiles, they are winners.

The *Twenty Elephant Restaurant* (£2.95) and *Ace Dragon Lid* (£3.25), both from Cape, are two further successful collaborations with Quentin Blake, whose cheeky, angular people and animals seem to fit the mixture of accurate character observation and unexpectedness of events which is Hoban's speciality. *Flat Cat* (Methuen Children's Books, £3.25) merely has Hoban's rhymes to give purpose. (Incentive to beginning readers) to bright, comic-strip pictures about the humorous antics of Cat, Rat and Snake.

to seven, and whose mathematical point will go down happily with the rest. Mr A. and his friends Kangaroo, Wombat and Goat, share a circular bath. It overflows. Whose fault? Experiments in Measurement. Eureka! (cries Mr A.). The pictures large and clear like the print itself, have a pleasant colouring: sepia line, light blue for water, pink for Mr A. The print is sepia too.

continued on following page

You Can't Stop People Reading

PAUL ZINDEL

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PEGGY WOODFORD (Editor)

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Illustrations by Shirley Hughes



P.J. KAVANAGH

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JUDY BLUME

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Bodley Head Books!

extra Watch, mark, learn

Heather Neill on a new television programme

Long Short and Tall Stories. BBC2 Wednesdays 6.50 pm. Produced by Caroline Pick.

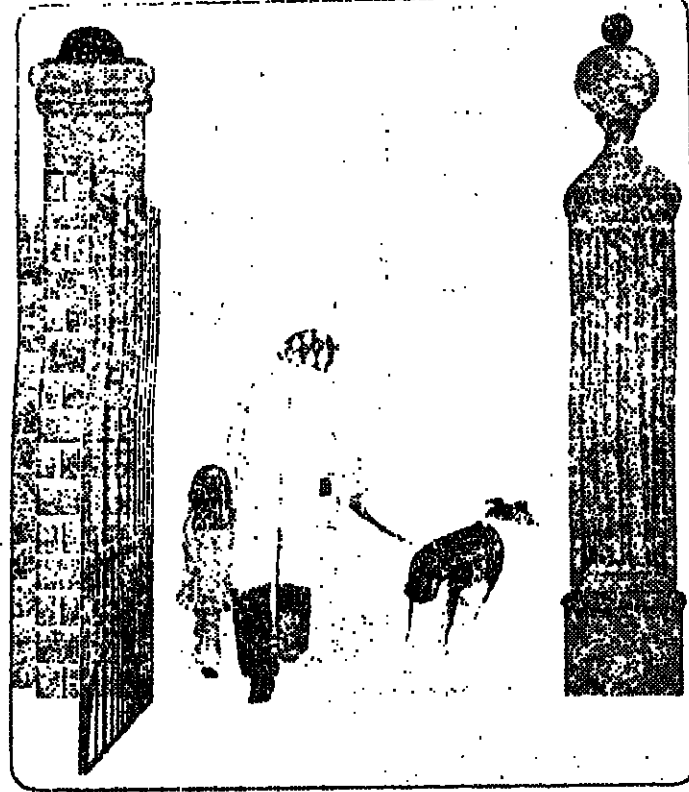
Television takes children away from books. Television encourages children to read books: just look at the success of television spin-offs. See how many more copies are sold when a novel is serialized!

Both these propositions are, in a sense, true. What matters, though, is not simply that children watch television and don't read as much as teachers, librarians—and parents—would like. What matters is that so often choice, taste and thus literary experience are limited by television. It is quite possible to find telly spin-offs that are of a high standard—it simply depends on the quality of the original programme. But if reading is a more virtuous activity than watching, the quality of the reading matter is of paramount importance. Can it be better to read glossy television-inspired editions of the *Famous Five* than to watch *Blue Peter*, or even *Life on Earth* (since no-one could claim that children watch exclusively these programmes designed for them)? On the other hand, I would certainly prefer my child to be reading Enid Blyton than ingesting the latest cops and robbers potboiler.

Jackanory has been a shining example of a book-based programme, which is good, simple television in itself and which encourages the reading of usually well-chosen stories. Now there is to be another, more direct, aid to children's book selection.

Long, Short and Tall Stories is directed at bewildered parents, ideally at this time watching with their offspring. They are presented with a number of children's books recommended and introduced by author and critic of children's books, Aidan Chambers, and librarian Grace Hallworth. The idea is to use television to make reading seem fun to the children and to help parents spend their money wisely. It is a good idea, but its force is weakened by the programme's placing on BBC 2. Isn't there a chance that the audience most likely to tune in will know a good deal about the chosen books already? Surely the BBC should not tacitly suggest that what children read is a matter of minority interest?

The first programme began (after



Anthony Browne's *A Walk in the Park* (Hamish Hamilton), one of the books to be featured in a future programme, is full of unexpected touches. (Note the bowler hat.) Every page has its surprise.

delightful pop-up graphics and a slightly edgy introduction by the presenters) with a bestseller, *Fingus the Frogman*, by Raymond Briggs. Dear (sic) Fungus has already disgusted teachers and reviewers, set up a cult following among university students and delighted children with his scatological behaviour and language. The comic-strip format lends itself well to television and to the children and to help parents spend their money wisely. It is a good idea, but its force is weakened by the programme's placing on BBC 2. Isn't there a chance that the audience most likely to tune in will know a good deal about the chosen books already? Surely the BBC should not tacitly suggest that what children read is a matter of minority interest?

proof of success: "Read it again". My Brother Sean, by Petronella Breinburg, helped one little girl over the trauma of her first day at school and Betsy Byars' *Eighteenth Emergency* might help older children to face up to bullies. But the main thing is that they are enjoyable to read. In subsequent programmes, large issues such as sex-stereotyping and class differences will be touched on, the latter by the introduction of a zany picture book which has not been widely taken up (and perhaps now will be) *A Walk in the Park* by Anthony Browne. Future subjects include such diverse characters as Alan Garner, *Faraway, Downy, Downy*, *Leeson*, *Phillips*, *Pearce* and *Quentin Blake*. And for anyone still in doubt, lists of details are available from the National Book League.

Modern illuminations

David Self on special editions of the Bible

Good News Bible, Special Edition, Bible Society. 544 00691 2. 54400681 5. The Bible Retold in Pictures 1—In the Beginning. Dawson Books (Granada Publishing) £1.50. 583 30388 9.

One of the ways the Bible Society celebrated its 175th birthday last year was to take a number of "pages" on Prestal, the GPO's view-data system. It says something for the viewers of Prestal that the Bible Society "page" they consulted most often was a text offering consolation for the depressed and troubled.

Another way the Bible Society (formerly the British and Foreign Bible Society) marked its birthday was by publishing this "special edition" of its much-praised 1976 translation of the Bible, *The Good News Bible*. The latter was illustrated with line drawings, highly regarded by some for their simplicity and wide appeal, but striking me as little more than whimsical

cartoons. This new edition dispenses with these and includes instead a vast number of colour photographs. These succeed admirably in illustrating and illuminating the historical and geographical background of the text, as do the flow charts and diagrams. Specially drawn colour maps explain Israel's relations with her neighbours, army movements and the migrations of whole civilizations.

There are also special features and illustrated sections providing further information on such topics as food, clothing, family life, vegetation of various regions and warfare. All the pictures are carefully and explicitly captioned and (as in the original *Good News Bible*) there is a glossary and a number of indexes. While I hope that not even this edition will ever eclipse the Authorized Version totally, the *Good News Bible* does seem the most explicit of the various modern translations and the one most suitable for school (and especially classroom) use. With its additional

editorial and illustrative material making it its own commentary as well, this special edition must be a prerequisite of every school and departmental library.

By comparison *The Bible Retold in Pictures* is a sad diminution of a great book, or at least it is judged by the first of this series of six paperbacks. In the beginning, I have no objection to the Bible being retold in picture-strip form—the Bible Society is in fact doing it rather well—but these imported American paperbacks are lacking in fervour and understanding of the stories they tell. Actually they are the comic-strip version not of the Bible but of an indifferent Hollywood Biblical epic, complete with every cliché from square-jawed hero to Eve's judicially placed trusses in the opening chapter.

They are easy to read and so may help reluctant readers to a knowledge of the stories but the insensitive and literal drawings will, I fear, be no more than a stumbling block to faith.

Bazaar characters in India

Bona Company. By Farukh Dhondy. Gillane £4.95. 575 02501 3.

Dhondy recreates and satirises, in this new collection of short stories, a memorable cast of true-to-life characters. There is Mocher (Tao) owner of a third-rate rag and would-be press baron; there is Kolmi the bookie with his strong and strange sense of honour which prevents him from accepting bets by the young; there is Samson the Parsi body-carrier who combines an immense

strength with a surprising humanness; there is the unforgettable blind man with his reportedly magical black dog. There is Concession the proto-Jesuit whose fear and rage at having his secret sins discovered convert him into a journalist who crusades against the hypocrites. First of the Catholics then of all other religious communities in the area, he is finally murdered, presumably at the behest of the relatives of his rich Muslim girlfriend—who naturally do not want to see a marriage between them.

Around these variously disreputable characters, sleazy, salacious, and occasionally silly, emerges the whole ethos and atmosphere of Poona, almost symbolically separated into the old town with its cafes, shops and bazaar, and the neighbourhood in which is located the Jesuit school where Dhondy studied.

The characters and locale substantiate Dhondy's expertise at short story writing to make this novel one of his best works to date.

Death dealing tales

Fred Urquhart on animal stories

Blackface Stallion. By Helen Griffiths. Illustrated by Victor Ambrose. Hutchinson £4.95. 09 141180 7. Stag. By Philip Holden. Illustrated by Tony Oliver. Hodder and Stoughton £4.50. 340 24651 0. The Many-Forked Branch. By Ewan Clarkson. Illustrated by Tom Catania. Hutchinson £4.95. 09 143320 7.

Helen Griffiths was 15 when she wrote her first children's book, *Blackface Stallion*, her nineteenth, describes the wanderings of a herd of wild horses in the desert of northern Mexico. *Blackface* is the son of a tough bay mustang and a well-bred palomino mare who landed in the desert by accident. In his tenth summer *Blackface* fights his sire for leadership of the herd and wins. Ten years later, after constant challenges, he loses the battle to one of his own sons, a mottled dun.

Mrs Griffiths gives a good and interesting but, perhaps, too dispassionate account of *Blackface's* life from birth to death. It is a bleak documentary of moving from the desert to mountain valleys in search of food and water, of attacks by cougars and coyotes, of fights between stallions for supremacy and fights between mares over custody of foals, with occasional strays to the coastal marshes where some horses are shot without reason by trigger-happy cowboys who might have profited, it strikes me, if they had captured the horses instead of killing them.

Some killings seem senseless, too, in Philip Holden's book, though I am sure deer-cullers will argue that the systematic destruction of deer is necessary to save stock fodder on agricultural land. *Stag* is a sequel to *Fawn*, which was the story of the first years of White

Patch, a red deer born in a valley of the Southern Alps of New Zealand. In this volume White Patch, aged six and now a magnificent 16-pointer, returns to the valley. He is sighted by Lance Miller, a professional deer-culler, who decides he must kill him for his antlers. Miller's pursuit of White Patch is exciting and full of information about the habits and running seasons of red deer, but it is punctuated by far too many references to different makes of rifles, as well as shootings, for my taste. It is true that the 16-pointer gets away in the end, the deer-culler having a change of heart about killing him. I hope this will impress young readers and make them less eager to use guns.

If I were young *The Many-Forked Branch* is the one of these three I'd treasure most. Ewan Clarkson's story ought to become a young people's classic. It is about Broken Knife, a 15-year-old Ojibway youth in the country of the Boundary Waters in northeast Minnesota in the 1830s. Broken Knife's father is crippled by the tribe's hereditary enemies, the Dakota, so one winter Broken Knife sets off alone to find food for his family. His pursuit of a deer, particularly a big buck, leads him into conflict with wolves, a bear, a snow blizzard and a small party of Dakota, also on a deer-hunting expedition.

Ewan Clarkson's handling of the confrontation between Broken Knife and middle-aged Painted Bear, after the Dakota leader breaks a leg and the Ojibway youth helps him, is sympathetically and beautifully done. It is an enthralling and lively book and tells us a great deal about the lives of both animals and Red Indians in those far-off days. In the end Broken Knife gets his big buck and brings the venison home, the only violent death in these books that seems to have reason behind it.



Frog and Toad, two of the nicest reasons for learning to read, are back again in another *Can Read* book by Arnold Lobel. Days with Frog and Toad (Warwick, £2.50) is more simple but delightful tales about their domestic circumstances. The same author has recently published his collection of original Fables (Cape, £3.95). A beautiful book, with delightfully unexpected lessons from life, paired with the author's coloured plates. But Frog and Toad take some beating.

The serpent under't

Rachel Blake

You can't keep out the Darkness. Edited by Peggy Woodford. Bodley Head £4.50. 370 30293 1.

The title and cover photograph of a shadowed red rose suggest the sinister lurking within this book. The theme in each story is indeed an evil something perceived or experienced for the first time, with an intense impact, by a young person; but the heads being varied, characters and backgrounds are mostly so everyday that we have met them all.

For horror lovers there is R. M. Lamming's *Cocktails*, where terrible physical mutations in the future compel rigid social norms, carrying with them a hectic bizarreness; and Robert Westall's ghost story of human beings vulnerable to possession by a mind-devouring creature, but saved by savage and incorruptible cats.

decaying gasometer of William Sansom's story, results from the casual cruelty of the children who isolate the climbing boy. In Joan Mark's story, too, there is casual cruelty in a woman's spite display of her hands, and a young boy is forced to see his mother objectively.

In *Eve* by A. I. Barker a young man finds a casual sexual encounter brings an immovably simple response in its wake; in John Westall's *Fort* a boy lets down a disabled friend for a girl, and her hard-headedness is revealed; in Peggy Woodford's *Underground* an adolescent's love obsession for a girl is destroyed by the analysis of a psychological researcher.

Penelope Lively's story of the truth behind the tales of a working-class German plane crash, with its wonderfully authentic boy and girl characters, lingers most in the mind. Of all these stories this short one is the most memorable.

Verse and worse

Leonard Clark on poems and rhymes

Roger was a Razor Fish and other Poems. Compiled by Jill Bennett. Illustrated by Maureen Roffey. Bodley Head £3.50.

A Nutcracker in a Tree: A Book of Riddles. By Riana Duncan. Anderson Press/Hutchinson £3.50. Witch Poems. Edited by Daisy Wallace. Illustrated by Margot Tones. Hyman. Pepper Press £3.50.

Clare Poems. Edited by Daisy Wallace. Illustrated by Margot Tones. Pepper Press £3.50.

The Nursery Rhyme Book. Illustrated by Lillian Rylands. Evans £3.95.

Mother Goose. By James Marshall. Kestrel Books £4.50.

All the Year Round. Compiled by Sona McKellar. Evans £4.25.

With the exception of *All the Year Round*, all these books must be regarded as picture books mainly intended for very young children; *Clare Poems* and *Witch Poems*, though illustrated, are more suitable for older children. *Roger was a Razor Fish* is an anthology of original verses considered to be suitable for the younger children. Even though some of these extremely simple verses are by such poets as Charles Cudde, Robert Frost and Ted Hughes, they are not very challenging or imaginative; their appeal is at a low level. The illustrations, though not distinctive, are

amusing and could give pleasure to some infants.

A Nutcracker in a Tree, described as "a book of riddles", has more appealing illustrations, and riddles which are said to be traditional. But once the answers to the riddles are known, one wonders for how much longer the book will continue to entertain. The best thing about it is the high quality of its production.

Witch Poems and *Giant Poems* are also anthologies, originally published in America. But few of the poems and extracts are very exciting. Poems about witches and giants should certainly be compelling, but there are not so many poems about these out-of-this-world characters as one might expect. There are poems by Walter de la Mare, Roy Fuller, James Stephens and James Reeves, but they could have been improved by the addition of some appropriate prose passages; a great deal has been written about witches and giants and their goings-on.

Confining the selections to poetry gives both books a limited value. They would be useful presents for some children who like to be sacrificed, but it is not certain how the books could be used for any length of time in the classroom.

The Nursery Rhyme Book and *Mother Goose* are both profusely illustrated and well produced, but we do have to have further collections of these old rhymes when there are so many other

better standard comprehensive editions on the market? The value of nursery rhymes is not denied. They should form a part of children's growing-up because of their very nature, though one does wonder what some of them can now mean to many modern infants. *Mother Goose* has the wider choice of rhymes, even though the choice is not all that wide whereas *The Nursery Rhyme Book* has the more interesting pictures.

All the Year Round is an anthology which has no pictures. The prose and poetry selected have been skilfully assembled, with poems by Christina Rossetti, A. S. J. Tassimond and Katherine Tynan; the prose passages are, with a few exceptions, by little-known writers. The book contains a story or poem for every week of the year and will certainly be useful for parents and teachers, but there will be some children who will swallow the book at a single gulp and then lay it aside. Although not an original idea, this selection should give pleasure to many young people, even though it does not contain much great literature.

There is something in all of them to please some children, even though the entertainment offered is in general, of a mundane nature. But as examples of very good productions, and with an eye upon their commercial success, the books, especially in the present economic climate, are good value for money.

Breaths of life

Duncan McGibbon

The Snow House. By Nora Whitson. Kestrel £4.75. 7226 5687 4.

Grasshopper and the Pickle Factory. By Jim Slater. Kestrel £3.50. 246 11226 3.

Big Boy Joyce and James Dunbar. Kestrel £2.95. 598 3.

These three novels are all children's stories in which animals and objects speak and act. Each one is lively and enjoyably illustrated. Yet they diverge distinctly in their characters.

Nora Whitson's period tale of a young class children is a completely delightful and satisfying narrative. She has maintained her complete accuracy in evocation of village life of the early 19th century, and she has ingeniously linked events and characters in a convincing way. The absence of the leading character's conversing with the reader, as in *Big Boy Joyce*, does not detract from the order of things is great enough to justify it. Uncle Rudolph's

magic sweets are, thus, something of a fictive impertinence. The *Dunbars' Jugg* is, again, a less successful story. A little boy draws the heroic vessel, which comes to life when he leaves it. Jugg then has three separate encounters; involving his identity, the nature of time and his fate. Yet these narrative threads are isolated in different chapters. Sandwiched between them are more metaphorical episodes. Encouraged by the bathroom mug, Jugg comes up against the paranoid Plunger and his System. He will not serve it, nor will he serve the slothful decorative jug, nor the plants, privileged in the hot house and under-privileged in the garden.

Finally, he encounters the exploited spiders, beats off Skulduggery, Plunger's macabre agent, and leads the kitchenware to overthrow the System. Then Jugg is dropped by the boy, who uses him to carry water for his painting, which he does not know has vanished, for, once dropped, the drawn jug returns. Right to the end, the story reads as if two have been posted into one. Yet a Jugg is dropped in redundant characters and unintegrated events.

Bullets in the bedroom

Nicholas Tucker

The Indian in the Cupboard. By Linda Ward Beech. Puffin £4.95.

children must, at one time have loved or even tried to believe that their favourite toys could actually come to life. It is not surprising that writers often take this idea and develop it into a story.

While some writers are happy to develop a world of unadventurous toys, where toys mainly conform to the details of their own life, others have tried to develop this theme into something more ambitious. In *The Indian in the Cupboard*, Linda Ward Beech has tried to do this. In a few cases precious toys may even reveal a more complex side to their personalities. For example, *The Indian in the Cupboard*, however, seems a very odd piece of story-telling, well able to stand comparison with older classics in this genre.

result is a book that is both attractive and exciting.

It concerns two realistically lively and occasionally obstreperous school-boys who discover how to make a plastic model of a Red Indian become a real if tiny personage in his own right. At this stage, though, the problems start: how should he be fed and hidden away from predators, and what can be done about his loneliness? An additional complication is that the Red Indian is a highly demanding individual with a precarious dignity, that his giant owners view almost with fear. When a similarly diminutive cowboy appears on the scene, things get nasty, and the fight they have shooting at bullets and arrows across the chasm that lie in between articles of bedroom furniture is anything but humorous. The final outcome, though, is happy as well as just, and provides a fittingly satisfying ending to an assured piece of story-telling, well able to stand comparison with older classics in this genre.

Denomination

Mary Hoffman

An ABC of Children's Names. By Doris and Mary Ewen. Macmillan £1.95.

From Ambitious Andrew to Zealous Zoe, most of the children in this Victorian ABC conform to the sex stereotypes. This facsimile edition of Doris and Mary Ewen's pull-out frieze should be seen but not read. Darling Dulcie (who Does her Duty as a Ruddy mother should), Robin the Rowdy boy (how Rough and Rude) and their pinnaled and sailor-suited companions were clearly intended to point a moral, not just adorn a tale. For adult collectors only.

What did the bold man say when he was given a comb for his birthday? "Thank you, I'll never part with it."

What is a meatball? A dance in a butcher's shop.

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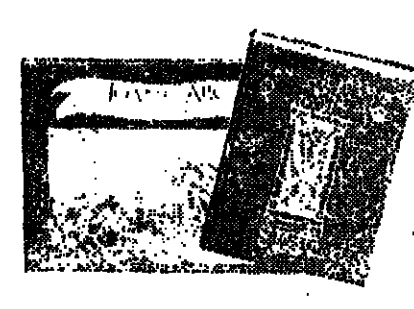


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extra

All systems go

Mary Hoffman reviews a book of essays on children's literature

The Signet Approach to Children's Books. Edited by Nancy Chambers. Kestrel £12.50 0 7226 5641 6

Don't be misled by the title: this is a heterogeneous collection of views. There is, of course, an editorial "approach". John Rowe Townsend's article "Standards of Criticism for Children's Literature" is presented straight, whereas Robert Leeson's reply is introduced as "provocative". Just a minute, wasn't it Townsend who provoked him? Still, there is no point in an editor without opinions. Nancy Chambers has already performed a signal service for children's books through the very existence of the journal here represented, which she has edited for 10 years.

Of the three newly commissioned articles, Andrew Bell on translating is a real find. She gives you the authentic thrill of a writer at work, as she and her collaborator struggle to recreate René Goscinny's French puns, regional accents and nationalistic jokes. Surrounded by references to books from Roger to Elizabeth David, they mull away, trying to make each other groan, until they end up with another of those perfectly hand-crafted, hand-lettered English versions that have made the tales of a little Gallic underdog seem an effortlessly English on this side of the channel. (You see, it's catching).

The collection opens with an oddity: a personal choice. Jay Williams's interview with a married couple of American children's writers, for all that it raises important questions about the degree of realism and role of magic in children's literature, is for someone who didn't know him an embarrassing read. "Dorothy went downstairs to make some coffee," Bob murmured, "you're right!" is just the kind of writing that makes people outside the children's book world reluctantly to step in.

Some might feel the same about the final article, Aidan Chambers's interview with Alan Garner about his *Stone Book* quartet, which has been gathering respectful mentions throughout the book. This is an unabridged version of a tape-transcript published in *Signet* two years ago. But even if you begin cold-own if you admire the quartet well this side of the Atlantic, I do not see it to be caught up by these two intensely serious people discussing what they are most intensely serious about. Aidan Chambers, a compiler in Garner's self-assessment as a craftsman, is nevertheless a relentless sleuth of how that craft is practised. Garner resists one of Chambers' interpretations. "Let's reject that then," says the kindly inquirer, and chooses another delicate probing instrument.

And at the nail-biting climax, when both participants and reader are at a white heat of discovery and

excitement, there is an éclaircissement, too elaborately earned to be sold short by synopsis or quotation. After that, the two men relax towards each other and stop talking to be overheard. It's the kind of reading that makes you resent having to get up and earn a living or string beans. At the end, of course, when Garner claims that in full flight he is "Aeschylus writing Desperate Dan", we know he is trailing his coat. But when he says "All revision is excision," he is allowing a true glimpse of his way of working which is both unpretentious and informative.

Between the low key beginning and the powerful finale are pieces to frustrate, charm and annoy the reader, depending on where you stand on the major issues in children's literature. Peter Hunt gives an intricate, myopic analysis of three "quality" children's books and Elaine Moss gives a simple, personal overview of the entire output of a decade. Too many people, to my mind, adopt a panicky "reads under the bed" view to anyone who mentions racism or sexism in children's books. A few are just personally nostalgic without having the wit or skill to convey their own idiosyncrasies to a reader who does not know them. But Nancy Chambers has provided the children's book world with a very rich mixture, from which I have pulled out a few plums. The rest is satisfying stuff and mercifully little of it is stodgy.

Make yourself tiny

Neil Philip on new versions of fairy tales

Thumbelina. By Hans Christian Andersen. Illustrated by Susan Jeffers. Hamish Hamilton £4.25.

Thumbelina. By Hans Christian Andersen. Illustrated by Lisbeth Zwerger. Macdonald and Jane's £3.95.

The Tinker Box. By Hans Christian Andersen. Illustrated by Ulf Löfgren. Hodder and Stoughton £3.50.

The Emperor's New Clothes. By Hans Christian Andersen. Illustrated by Ulf Löfgren. Hodder and Stoughton £3.50.

Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs. By J. and W. Grimm. Illustrated by Nancy Ekholm Burkert. Yesterday £4.95.

The Valiant Little Tailor. By J. and W. Grimm. Illustrated by Victor G. Ambrus. Oxford University Press £3.50.

Jack and the Beanstalk. Retold and illustrated by Tony Ross. Andersen Press £3.50.

World's Book £3.50.

The pick of these fairy tale picture books are Jan Wahl's *Drakekiste*, of which more later, and Susan Jeffers's *Thumbelina*. Jeffers's *Thumbelina* is a beautiful, delicate, and graceful, and the text by Amy Ehrlich admirably terse. *Thumbelina* is a weak, sentimental story, sharing none of the bitter irony of Andersen's best work, and any retailer who can inject some muscle into it deserves our gratitude. This is especially true in this case, where the pictures are so ravishing that the book seems likely to become a favourite, demanded again and again. It is the birds which hold the attention; the swallow arched above the first mouse's nest with Thumbelina clinging to his back is particularly striking.

Lisbeth Zwerger's syrupy *Thumbelina* cannot compete against such odds. The illustrations are competent. Arthur Rackham's pictures are stunning in their detail and Jeffers's lightness of touch. Zwerger's book is whimsical, cosy; Jeffers's is fresh and refreshing. Ulf Löfgren's Andersen books, *The Tinker Box* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*, are undistinguished. The pictures tend to lack any dramatic tension, and the texts by Linda Jennings are bland. To compare her *The Tinker Box* with Jeffers's *Thumbelina* is like comparing a turkey with a chicken.

pare her *The Tinker Box* with Brian Alderson's crisp, idiomatic translation in his new edition of Lang's *Yellow Fairy Book* is to be made aware of how much these stories rely on being told with style. Löfgren's illustrations are by no means inept, but their humour is the humour of caricature; not a true, and they therefore have a blunt edge of Andersen's wit.

Nancy Ekholm Burkert's wonderfully realized medieval illustrations to *Snow-White* and the *Seven Dwarfs* (reissued in some way to Susan Jeffers's work) have a sombre dignity which matches the poet Randall Jarrell's elegant text. They make an interesting contrast to the rude exuberance of Victor Ambrus's *The Valiant Little Tailor*. Ambrus conveys the comic suggestions of the story by means of pictures so untidily grotesque as the only possible response is a smile. His giants, patched, tattooed, apoplectic, overflow with life.

Tony Ross's *Jack and the Beanstalk* attempts a similar limbo, but its distortion is more menacing than whimsical, and its text clumsily paced. Ross cannot be denied the energy which he attacks the tale, but the story he was doing just that; the approach appears to some, though, to be a little too much in the service of the tale, and many teachers are struggling in isolation after initial training courses which are often woefully inadequate preparation for the actual day-to-day business of teaching. Unfortunately, teachers with the greatest awareness of their limitations are most at risk from the lure of new materials which they are ill-equipped to handle.

The main problem, of course, lies in the area of teacher-training. The English-learning world is a large place and funds are not available for the enormous number of courses which would be needed to keep teachers everywhere in touch with the latest developments. The

Help yourself to English

Susan Norman

Recent trends and developments in language teaching and EFL publishing have thrown the traditional relationship between teacher, coursebook and class into disarray. It is no longer simply a case of opening the book at a certain page and doing the exercises. In spite of the current emphasis on student-centred learning, all too often modern courses are dependent on a teacher-dominated presentation. More pressure is being placed on teachers to be good classroom managers and to have practical teaching skills as well as a theoretical knowledge of various aspects of education. Even the traditional concepts of "teachers" and "teaching" are under threat as we talk about course leaders, facilitators and guides who are expected to "aid learning".

As a teacher and writer, I can recognise the value of many of the current advances, but as a teacher-trainer I am all too well aware of the increasing pressure on teachers. This is not so much a problem in Britain where there are numerous private and state-run pre- and in-service courses; but abroad, many teachers are struggling in isolation after initial training courses which are often woefully inadequate preparation for the actual day-to-day business of teaching. Unfortunately, teachers with the greatest awareness of their limitations are most at risk from the lure of new materials which they are ill-equipped to handle.

The main problem, of course, lies in the area of teacher-training. The English-learning world is a large place and funds are not available for the enormous number of courses which would be needed to keep teachers everywhere in touch with the latest developments. The

British Council is battling against the odds, particularly in the prevailing economic climate, so the onus must fall on writers and publishers to educate teachers as well as students, and the teacher's book has an increasingly central role to play in published courses.

Generally, the demand for detailed instructions and back-up material for teachers is being met, but no matter how explicit the suggestions in the teacher's book, there will always be teachers who cannot or will not do it like that. They may, of course, be competent to teach the material in some equally effective way, but there are those who are not, and the course which relies totally on the presentation of language by the teacher will be of little use to the students under these adverse circumstances.

The need, then, is for published courses to make language structures more readily accessible in the books available to the students. "Self-access" is a term in current parlance, but it is frequently taken to refer to worksheets and taped material to be studied by individual students in their own time. Coursebooks are the ideal vehicle for self-access material for the whole class. Careful rubrics and a clear presentation can allow classes to organise their own creative practice as long as they are not actually obstructed by the teacher.

Having taught numerous teachers in various European countries, I do not feel that I am being unduly pessimistic about the quality of teaching. One lady came up to me during a teacher training course I was giving to tell me how much she liked my teaching methods but that she would not be adopting them herself. "In order to teach

your way", she said, "you have to understand what you are teaching." In any case, if the language structures are readily accessible to the students, the problem of people who miss lessons is solved; they can simply make up the work in their own time without disrupting the class. Meanwhile, the material is also available for revision or to cater for a faster rate of learning according to the needs of the individual student.

In the general swing towards a "functional" rather than a "structural" approach to language learning, many students and teachers have been left floundering, and in these cases there is a strong case for the use of books of reference in the classroom. One of the greatest services any teacher can render his students is to introduce them to the numerous ways in which EFL dictionaries and grammar books can be exploited for self-access learning. This also caters for the many learners, perhaps older students or those from a very traditional educational background, who thrive on the security of learning lists, rules and exceptions.

All of us would benefit from a shift towards greater development of self-access material and learning strategies. If you teach a student how to use a dictionary you are giving him access to all vocabulary, not just that which you have the time to cover in class. Similarly a grammar book can provide the bones of the entire language, so that teachers are actually free to expand the functional and communicative elements. Rather than exploiting a series of reading and listening comprehensions, we could be teaching an approach or strategy which could be applied to all texts the student might encounter.

Any reviewer can criticise an anthology in terms of what is included and what is left out. Some of the extracts are not as good as they might be (J. C. Richards on "Songs in Language Learning", for instance), and I was surprised that Stevick is included only once, with one of his earlier sets of remarks. And Gattegno appears not at all. Both Stevick and Gattegno (whether you like them or not) have been major contributors to the changing face of language teaching over the last decade, and this should be reflected. Nonetheless, such criticisms are minor and subjective, and the anthology is a balanced one. It should provide a useful starting point for discussion and further reading for trainee and practical teachers alike.

The *Teaching Primary English* provided very pleasant and enlightening evening's reading. The three authors have based the book

EFL

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1. Communication Games—

By Donn Byrne and Sholeh Rixon

Deals with the principles behind making classroom activities truly communicative—and how these principles can be applied when designing games to suit particular students. 32 communication games are described and instructions on how to make each game are given. The booklet is illustrated with photographs and drawings of actual materials and there is also a select bibliography and list of manufacturers and publishers' addresses. The booklet complements the ELTI film "Communication Games in a Language Programme".

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2. Simulations—

By David Herbert and Gill Sturridge

Has an introduction on the value of simulation in language teaching, on stages in the design and production of a simulation, and suggestions as to how stages in a simulation might be sequenced in class. Materials for four different simulations are given in full, with suggestions for adaptation and variation. There is also a bibliography and a list of publishing material.

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3. Oral Practice in the Language Laboratory—

by J. V. Kerr

Deals with techniques of design and use of dialogues and drills for controlled oral practice based on language laboratory work. Different types of drills are described and exemplified and there is a section illustrating complete teaching units consisting of introductory dialogues and drills, usually linked by a story-line or common theme. Two cassette recordings of all the teaching materials accompany the booklet.

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Secrets of croco's teeth

Stephen Barber

My First Nature Book series: Water, Air, Earth, Earthworm. By Eileen Dolan. Moonlight Publishing £1.50 each. Funny Facts About: The Tiger, The Wolf, The Giraffe, The Crocodile. By Nella Bosnia. Evans £2.95 each.

The first four titles in the new My First Nature Book series are rather tame. They have an international background, written first in French, and then translated into English. They appeal to the curious plodder: "When water is very hot, it boils. Steam is a kind of gas made of tiny drops of water." The language is simple, intended for four to eight-year-olds, and one can just see children being painstakingly coached through their basic facts.

The books are nicely made, and

the proportion of text to picture is right. But the pictures themselves are often oddly composed, crowded and with no real centre of interest. Each book is built on the same pattern, asking: the question: where? when? how? and why?—and then answering them. But one can hardly say these books arouse curiosity; they will satisfy it in the already curious.

Funny Facts are also international, having started their life in Spanish. But this does not mean they are of interest to an audience quite different from the Facts are not, in fact, funny at all. These are the usual scraps of disconnected information that might one day come in handy doing crosswords or answering quizzes. But Nella Bosnia's pictures are outrageously memorable. "The crocodile has an enormous mouth, in which are more than sixty five teeth" shows people sitting on a bench, quite oblivious of a vast poster behind them in which a

gigantic crocodile holds a tooth-brush in one claw, while the other grasps a tube exuding the words "Croco: the toothpaste for everyone." The crocodile's speed of movement is conveyed by two of them surfing their food by a supermarket sporting tins of Gazeo flies and mosquitoes, and their small size at birth by a row of baby crocodiles tucked up in bed while fond parents doze through a magazine.

Wolf and Giraffe are similarly alluring. The wolf's nocturnal habits involve turning up for the opera in top hat and tails at after eleven, while the giraffe's preference for groups "of about ten" is shown by eleven giraffes going to a beach. *Tiger* is more sinister, and the thought of his being fitted for his fur coat by a furrier is brutal. Maybe the wild humour of these pictures will appeal more to children. But even so, can so trivial an intention have been so overreached in performance.



The big skeleton, the little skeleton and the dog skeleton all go for a walk in the dark and frighten each other stiff, so to speak. Punnybones, by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (Heinemann £3.95) is bright and jolly—and not a bit frightening.

Book club

The new Penguin Book Club for Students offers teenagers of 15 and over a list containing fiction and non-fiction, under the independent editorship of writer and headmaster John Foster. Teachers are invited to take orders and, for every 15 books, may select a free book. The first order earns a bonus: a free copy of the *Penguin Thesaurus*.

In the first of his quarterly newsletters, Mr Foster profiles Solenbryn and introduces, inter alia, *Sons and Lovers*, but his list suggests a fair understanding of the diversity of taste for which he must cater. There are authors too who, at

English without tears

They Games with English Book 1. By Colin Granger. Heinemann Educational £1.95. 435 pages.

They Games with English is an 80-page illustrated booklet for students of English who have an elementary knowledge of the language. Each page contains a game or puzzle (find the difference, word search, etc.) and the student is encouraged to work on his own, without the teacher's help. The games are designed to be played as class activities and provides further ideas for practice. The language points covered by the games are listed in a particular structure or grammatical point. It can therefore be used to supplement and to provide light relief during a formal language course and, if used selectively in this way, it is a very valuable complement to a main course book. However, I suspect that most of its users will be

those teaching short-term or holiday courses. Here it will be successful in sustaining many a cheerful student in which it will be the sessions and not the teacher who does most of the talking. As Colin Granger points out, "Students will use their English more naturally, less self-consciously as their concentration will be on solving the problems posed by the games and not on the language they use to solve the problem."

The price may seem quite expensive for 64 pages but as these pages contain the rules for over a hundred language games, it is likely that many a summer school teacher will find space in his luggage for such a useful aid when he next heads for Bournemouth, Brighton or Cambridge.

David Self

How they live now

An engaging and informative new series of easy-to-read books which introduces young children to the ways of life in other countries and cultures. Each book is illustrated with a variety of photographs and maps. The first four titles are: *Kiku of Japan*, *Juliet Pigeot*, *Rashid of Saudi Arabia*, *Zahra of Egypt*. ISBN 0 7186 2390 7. DIMITRA OF THE GREEK ISLANDS. CAROLA MATTHEWS ISBN 0 7186 2404 0. RAY OF INDIA. ARUNA HARDY ISBN 0 7186 2419 9. Inspiration copies available from LUTTERWORTH PRESS.

Wrapped in green cellophane

Peter Fanning on Theroux

London Snow. By Paul Theroux with wood engravings by John Lawrence. Hamish Hamilton £4.95. 241 pp. ISBN 0 241 10450 5.

Here is a traditional Christmas book in the style of Garfield and Dickens: a fable and fantasy rolled into one and wrapped up with glazed fruit and crisp green cellophane.

Snyder, the latter-day Scrooge of the piece, with holes in his shoes and a leak in his hat, is threatening to sell Mrs. Mutterance's sweetshop and transform it into a "laundry-ette". Then comes the snow and three or four pages of wonderful, muffled prose. Mr Snyder disappears into the thick white curtain and is only recovered by the efforts of the children. "We've got to try to like him. If

we like him, even for a short time, we'll find him." And they do. Just in time for Christmas Day.

Paul Theroux rolls out the Christmas nostalgia, "silver silences... my own tea tray... my father gave me a glass of milk and called me 'Teddy'." But he never gets mawkish or sentimental. The eye for detail is much too firm. Mrs Mutterance indulges the ear with her own special brand of wine-gum words: "Rumples—um-pus—um-trum-tarant's" angrily. John Lawrence's engravings add a complementary framework and the climax is as thrilling as a climax should be. For the well-read child who has everything, *London Snow* is just the thing—what is it to don't decide to buy a copy too and keep it for yourself.

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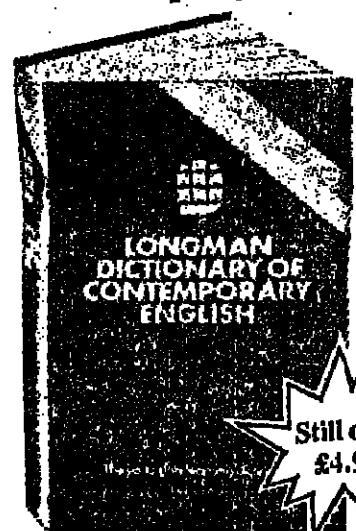
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EFL

Can you hear me?

Sam McCarter

Are You Listening? By Wendy Scott. Illustrated by Colin Smithson and Anne Morrow. Oxford University Press £1.00. Teacher's Book £1.25. Cassette also available.

Listening to Maggie. By Leslie Gore. Longman £1.50. Workbook 75p. Cassette also available.

It Happened to Me. By Roy Kingsbury and Roger Scott. Longman £1.30. Workbook 75p. Cassette also available.

Exchanges: Students' Book, Part A. By Philip Frowse, Judy Garton-Sprenger, and T. C. Jupp. Heinemann Educational £1.95. Tapes and cassettes also available.

All the above books are, to a greater or lesser extent, concerned with aural comprehension. *Are You Listening?* is a useful and stimulating unit for the teacher wishing to develop the aural comprehension skills of eight to 11-year-olds who have been learning English for a year or so.

The pupils' workbook has much in common with a lot of children's books of the cut-out/colour-in type

and is thus a well-chosen vehicle for getting across to children of this age group. There are 42 exercises, each confined to a single page: the pupil listens to a short, clear, cassette, or read aloud by the teacher, which gives structured information enabling him to do the exercise.

Working on the principle that passive knowledge of language is invariably greater than active, the passages are more complex structurally than the language the pupils would normally use. Having the children follow instructions in this way develops their ability to co-ordinate their work and the language they use: this is much more beneficial than the all too common aural comprehension exercises that are no more than memory tests.

The teacher's book gives detailed instructions for each exercise and similarly intelligent suggestions for further work.

The two titles from the Longman Listening Series, *Listening to Maggie* and *It Happened to Me* are equally admirable books. The former is aimed at the intermediate level and the latter at the higher intermediate/advanced level. The student of English as a Foreign Language. Each unit comprises a text-

book with answers and explanations, a workbook containing only the exercises from the textbook and a cassette.

The salient difference between these units and Wendy Scott's is the admixture of oral and aural work, combined with great effect. The framework of each of the four parts which make up *Listening to Maggie* is basically the same, with the first five subsections carrying a combination of the activities. The dialogues are excellent, conveying not only nuances of meaning but different accents, demonstrating that we do not all speak as if we were being confined by Eli's "received pronunciation snaz jacket".

Both units supply a wealth of necessary details about spoken English that will prove to be a complete boon to general courses. They can both be used by students working on their own.

While the material in *Exchanges* is thorough and suitable for pre-intermediate level, the layout of the book is disconcerting, opening up page 10 to find it difficult to know what to latch on to. It does replace the funniness of conventional lay-out, but the result is disjointed.

Package deal English

Jane Mathers

Ways to English for Short Courses. Longman English Teaching Services.

Three books recently published in the *Ways to English for Short Courses* series by Longman English Teaching Services are *Activities* (£1.70), *Up and Away* (£1.95), and *Starting Points* (£1.35). The three books have an immediate appeal for the youthful through their covers, format and content. Attractive colour photograph covers, bold print and cartoons give instant appeal to these three books.

In general, the three books achieve what they set out to do. *Activities* is carefully ordered in response to classical errors made by intermediate students of English. Essential vocabulary and grammatical structures are embedded in themes of common interest to young adults: jobs and work, holidays, health, love and marriage. Though some of these themes may be well worn for a post-teenage audience, their treatment is thorough. There may be doubts as to whether the format of the course will always be acceptable to recipients, but there can be little to quibble with concerning

the structures selected for inclusion in *Activities*. Moreover, the teacher's notes are of a high standard, giving clear instructions as to how the course can be applied over two, three or four weeks. The teacher's notes also advise teachers to ward students in advance that the course starts easily but then becomes "a good deal more challenging". Too many short courses are published without any warning to teachers or students of a geometric rather than an arithmetic progression of language to be assimilated from unit to unit.

Up and Away is intended as supplementary material to a full language course, or as a short course for individual preparation for a visit to Britain. It consists of situations related to the general context of international travel, with the intermediate learner in mind. Texts, tables, photographs, drawings, conversations and grammatical exercises are the various forms of presentation of the themes. The format of the presentation is stimulating, though some of them are too closely related to the time at which the book was

written and are therefore somewhat dated. *Starting Points* is a project of much international interest. And, to what extent do the examples of realia included in the book serve as enduringly important aspects of British culture for the traveller? It is a question to which so many realia should be reproduced in book form for students.

Starting Points is a project of publication with the prestige of close collaboration with the Council of Europe project to establish a European unit/credit system for adults. The linguistic content of *Starting Points* is based on the communicative aims of the Council of Europe's *The Threshold Level* (1975). It is not surprising therefore that this is a well-thought-out course. It combines social language with a linear presentation for structures are introduced and practised in repetition and guided role-plays. A minor criticism is the over-reliance on the *Starting Points* is a sound intermediate course of English in which European situations are effectively used.

English for Europe

Peter O'Connell

Follow Me: Book 1. By L. G. Alexander and Roy Kingsbury. Longman £1.30. Teacher's book £2.25.

This course was written in collaboration with the BBC, the German Adult Education Association and the broadcasting stations of West Germany, Switzerland and Austria. It was designed for German-speaking beginners attending evening classes for two 90-minute sessions a week for two academic years. Each week there was a 15-minute TV and a 15-minute radio broadcast to support the work of the classroom. In addition there is a parallel home-study course.

This review is confined to the books of the first year and the students' coursebook, the workbook and the teacher's book. The authors have unequivocally adopted a functional-national syllabus based on the specifications of the Council of Europe's "Waystage". In each of the 39 units they give students practical, engaging exercises in the essential areas of communication. As the same time they have skill-

fully controlled and sequenced the structural and lexical content: this is no glorified phrase book. Every 10 units a theme is reintroduced at a higher language level and this cyclical format strengthens the student's control of the language.

All three books are clear, thorough and systematic. In the students' book the emphasis is on practice and using the language as in all direct methods. There is repetition of models and some drilling but much of the practice work challenges the learner to say something relevant and interesting—by interpreting maps, signs, pictures, tables or diagrams, by solving puzzles, by taking part in telephone dialogues, by using realia. The illustrations are admirable—a mixture of photography and line drawings that quietly serve their purpose of promoting useful language practice (how pleasing to find not a single grotesque or monster amongst them). The cassette has recordings of the dialogues and a number of exercises that can be used in class or in the language laboratory to practice all the language skills. One feature is particularly welcome—

that listening with authentic material. Nothing is better for a beginner more than to understand a "real" language. The workbook shows the same mixture of control and imagination.

The teacher's book is immensely thorough. It gives a clear statement of the principles on which the course is designed and very detailed information on the different types of presentation (eight different types). Each unit has five to six pages of comment on the contents of the lesson—linguistic, cultural and pedagogical. There are four index pages: vocabulary, structures, functions and even place names.

The language of the rubrics in this kind of book is inevitably difficult for beginners to understand. This is a disappointing feature. This is a disappointing feature on the use of the course in language schools in this country. Meanwhile, however, the pattern of the book is excellent. The students in Germany, Switzerland and Austria must be delighted with it. It is a well-thought-out course which would be a great solution.

Latching on to the fish

Chris Kennedy on English for specific purposes

Core English for General Science. By Martin Stares. Heinemann £1.85. Teacher's book £1.95.

Study English for Science. By A. R. Bell and P. L. Sandler. Longman £1.20. Teacher's book 90p. The Petroleum Programme. By P. L. Sandler. PEP £5.00. Cassettes £12.00 plus VAT for three.

Expert English. By Susan Norman. BBC £3.00. Cassettes £12.00 plus VAT for three.

A variable often neglected in the design of materials for teaching English for Science and Technology is that of the problem faced by teachers of English who may have no knowledge of science themselves. Such teachers are quite rightly wary of situations in which they feel they need a grasp of certain scientific concepts, however basic, in order to teach the language.

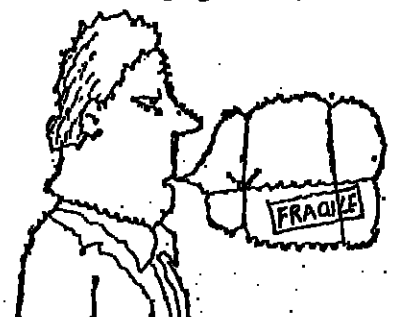
This problem is recognized in Martin Stares' book *Core English for General Science*, designed for learners who have little English and who are following or about to follow a basic science course. Although the science content, drawn from physics and chemistry, is elementary, it does present problems to a teacher of English with no knowledge of the scientific concepts involved. The author's solution has been to provide a clear and concise teacher's guide which not only supplies a key to the exercises and ideas on which the book is based, but also a section which explains to the teacher the scientific concepts and terms used in each unit. The seven units in the book cover a range of scientific activities, such as expressing differences, grouping, and ordering, and the exercises within each unit are designed to practise the grammatical structures associated with these activities. Thus the sections on stating differences practises the structure exemplified in the sentence: "Protobas are positive".

Most of the material is sentence-based, although there are some exercises designed to practise the use of sentence-linking devices. Most of the exercises designed to present and practise the structures are short and rather mechanical and a teacher would need to supplement them with his own material both to extend the exercises and to ensure that the material which is so stands can be dry and uninteresting.

Study English for Science is a more lively book, but then both its content and the level of the exercises are more advanced. The book is not linked as closely to science as *Core English*, but draws on non-specialist texts such as the preservation of food, a reading passage on pollution, and a topic which is followed by a study section using a variety of exercise types, including those requiring the use of a dictionary. Some fairly traditional comprehension questions are followed, then a section on grammar which is the least satisfactory aspect of the book. A wide range of grammatical features is presented in each unit (for example

grammatical features in Unit 5 include connectives, negative conditions, comparing, and giving approximate numbers and estimates).

Although a certain amount of recycling of such structures is apparent throughout the course, the exercises themselves are short and would need supplementing by the teacher. Each unit ends with a passage for intensive reading and guided writing exercises. The reading and writing tasks are more specific practice being provided in drawing graphs and tables. Although designed particularly for students of science and technology, the broad topical approach adopted could provide material for use in more general English classes, for example upper secondary classes where English is the medium of instruction. Such material might also be appropriate for use in classes where English is the mother tongue of the students as well as in second language classes.



English for export.

The next two books are also designed for intermediate learners. Both are published in the BBC English by Radio series and continue the series' tradition of well-produced professional materials which interest and motivate without breaking particularly new ground. *The Petroleum Programme* is designed for use by those working in the oil industry who need to extend their skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking and also to be introduced through English to the processes and terms involved in oil exploration, drilling and production. The type of student is not made much more specific although process operators and middle management trainees are given as examples. The materials have been designed to be as wide as possible, which is always a difficult decision within English for Specific Purposes: make the materials too general and you fail to satisfy the needs of special-interest groups; make them too specific and they become relevant to too small an audience and may also restrict unnecessarily what the students wish to learn.

The content is topic-based with the same pattern of activities being followed for each unit. Texts for reading and listening (tapes are an integral part of the course software) are followed by grammar exercises and graded writing exercises based on information extracted from charts and diagrams. Some of the dialogues used for listening practice are somewhat artificial, especially when camouflaged content becomes the objective of the dialogue ("Tell me more about the rock samples, Paul"). Presentation is clear and effective use is made of diagrams and pictures, as aids to the teach-

Language of the stars

Worlds. By Lennox Peterson and David Bolton. Heinemann 95p. 435 28702 8.

Imagine you have a class full of "space" addicts. Other than the usual "space" topics, the book contains 12 extracts from popular science magazines, each followed by a comprehension, vocabulary and grammar exercise. There are two test papers. Unfortunately, the probability of finding "space" material in the book is not high. The book is a good example of a book which is not what it is advertised to be.

Worlds is never likely to become much more than supplementary material.

In fairness, the book is only one of a series which includes the two other titles: *Work and Leisure* and *Our Environment*, and the level of structural and lexical complexity is high enough to test proficiency students. However, in these times of economic stringency, it is stretching the imagination a little to contemplate schools recommending a series of specialized comprehension books when there are so many general proficiency courses on the market which provide students with variety as well as instruction.

Paddy Bostock

Self-help alternative?

Paddy Bostock

Countdown to English. By Roger Owen. BBC English by Radio £4.00. Cassettes £12.00 plus VAT for three.

Because of world-wide recession, a strong pound and steadily increasing school fees, the only way for foreign students to learn English may soon be to do-it-themselves, rather than in the language school boom of the sixties and seventies, but with the advantage now of the advances in teaching technique made in those years.

Countdown to English, published by the BBC (who say it can be used in conjunction with the English by Radio programmes, or without them, for self-study or small group teaching) is intended for students taking intermediate examinations, and will no doubt attract many overseas learners of English in these economically lean times.

It offers a wide selection of written and oral exercises, backed up by three cassettes, and covers the range of structures expected for the Cambridge First Certificate. It does not fall into the trap of over-illustration: each section is divided into grammatical explanations, a composition exercise, a dialogue, a multiple-choice exercise, a completion exercise called "word games", a listening comprehension, and a cartoon with a corresponding passage on tape. In addition, there are three test papers, including the First Certificate, as well as a number of model compositions and a key to the exercises.

The different sections each have a unifying theme and the author manages to avoid the temptation of English life at its most mundane or that of the over-simplification of

subject matter to match language competence by presenting topics, such as the nature of language learning itself, which are likely to interest discriminating and mature students whatever their level. This is particularly true of the reading comprehension passages, which are taken from a variety of modern sources and do not underestimate the reader's intellectual capacity merely because he has only an "intermediate" command of English. This attitude to language learning is also reflected in the taped material, which is spoken at normal speed, includes real-life hesitations and some concession to accents, including foreign ones, even though the overall tone of the voices is impeccable RP.

The problem with not having a teacher to tell the student what to do, however, is that the author has to do it instead and the grammatical explanations in *Countdown to English* must sometimes be more difficult for the student than the exercises. In the nature of such self-study courses, grammatical abstractions are hard to avoid but there is the danger of distracting learners from the point of an exercise by talking about "finite verbs", "auxiliaries" and "uncountable nouns", when such phrases may not necessarily be assumed. Similarly, probably unavoidable, limitations are evident in the use of long sub-sentence tables for guided composition. Model essays are provided at the back of the book, but there remains the distinct feeling that the DIY learner is at a disadvantage in comparison with the classroom student.

However, in general, the course is well-balanced, interesting and attractively packaged. For those who are prepared to work hard and fill in some of the gaps for themselves, it should provide useful background for intermediate exams.

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Apply for forms, salary and conditions of service, and details of the post, to the Principal Educational Psychologist, Leicester City Council, 100 Victoria Road, Leicester LE1 7JG. Tel: 0533 42117. Fax: 0533 42117. Closing date: 10th December 1980.

For further details or to arrange an informal visit, telephone Mrs W. G. Brandon (Director, Child Guidance Services) on 01-897 9571.

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